

ACCULTURATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IN HAWAI'I: CASE OF THE EAST-  
WEST CENTER

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## **ABSTRACT**

In order to grow more experience in different culture, many of the college students choose to continue their education abroad. The United States is known for its robust educational system. Moreover, there is great cultural diversity in many of the educational institution in the United States. Hence, the international students can not only be exposed to the US culture but also other different cultures.

The East-West Center has provided various programs to enhance students' engagement in the local culture in Hawai'i and meanwhile facilitate their communication with people from all around the world. This qualitative research aims to examine international students' behaviors, self-identity, attitude, cultural awareness when they approach to different cultures within the East-West Center.

The results from the interviews and participant observation reveal the international students' evaluation and experiences in attending the activities in the East-West Center, which help us to know more about the role of the East-West Center in their acculturation.

Understanding what kind of resources do the international students need can offer the East-West Center with multiple dimensions in assisting the students to adjust to a new society.

## Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	vii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	5
2.1 ACCULTURATION.....	5
2.2 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE HAWAI'I .....	8
2.3 THE EAST-WEST CENTER .....	12
CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	18
CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY .....	21
4.1 INTERVIEW .....	21
4.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION .....	23
4.3 PURPOSIVE SAMPLING FOR THE INTERVIEW.....	25
4.4 DATA ANALYSIS.....	27
CHAPTER 5. RESULTS .....	28
5.1 MANAGERS AND THEMES .....	28
5.1.1 MANAGERS .....	28

5.1.2 THEMES.....	29
5.2 THE EXAMINATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	32
5.3 INTERVIEW RESULTS .....	34
5.3.1 THE EVALUATION AND INFLUENCE OF THE CBI .....	35
5.3.2 THE EVALUATION AND INFLUENCE OF THE WES.....	40
5.3.3 CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTION IN THE COMMUNITY .....	43
5.3.4 CONNECTION BETWEEN STUDENTS AND EWC STAFF MEMBERS .....	46
5.3.5 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' INTEGRATION .....	49
5.4 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION RESULTS .....	52
5.4.1 OBSERVATION 1: THE MEETING .....	53
5.4.2 OBSERVATION 2: THE EXCHANGE .....	54
5.4.3 OBSERVATION 3: THE KITCHEN AT HALE MANOA.....	57
5.4.4 OBSERVATION 4: THE KITCHENS AT HALE KUAHINE .....	58
CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION.....	61
CHPTER 7. CONCLUSION .....	65
REFERENCES .....	70
APPENDICES .....	78
APPENDIX A - Consent form.....	78
APPENDIX B- Interview questions (Students).....	80

APPENDIX C- Interview questions (Staffs) .....	82
APPENDIX D- Supplemental tables .....	83

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Codes and information of student respondents .....	83
Table 2. Codes and information of staff respondents .....	84
Table 3. Manager 1 .....	85
Table 4. Manager 2 .....	86
Table 5. Manager 3 .....	87
Table 6. Manager 4 .....	88
Table 7. List of the themes.....	89
Table 8. Labels and indicators of the themes.....	91

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CBI: Community building institution  
ELI: English Language Institution  
EWC: The East-West Center  
EWCPA: East-West Center Participants Association  
HK: Hale Kuahine  
HM: Hale Manoa  
IGSC: International Graduate Student Conference  
ISA: International Student Association  
ISS: International student service  
UH: University of Hawai‘i  
WES: Wednesday Evening Seminar



## **CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION**

Under the influence of globalization and internationalization, students have more chances to study abroad in order to experience a different culture, learn a foreign language, or get a better education for their future career. It takes great courage and determination to sojourn to a new country, especially for those who study abroad alone. There are advantages as well as disadvantages associated with studying abroad. It is common that international students have to face some challenges such as language barrier, alienation, racism, culture shock, homesickness, frustration, financial problems, depression, and difficulties in their academic works. All of these issues can weaken international students' confidence or even have a devastating effect on their mental and physical health condition. Although the degree of the negative feelings may vary due to the region the student comes from and visit (For example, Taiwanese students who study at Europe are more likely to experience higher level of culture shock than the ones who study at East Asia), educational institutions should provide sufficient assistance and resource to help international students to minimize the frustration as well as difficulties when they try to adjust to the new environment.

According to Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936), acculturation could take place in many situations: where there is no social or political inequality between groups, where elements of culture are voluntarily received or forced to be received by people, and when inequality exist between groups, especially stemmed from political or social dominance in one group, or under the circumstance when “ political dominance by one group, without recognition of its social dominance by the subject groups” and “recognition of social superiority of one group by the

other without the exercise of political dominance by the former” (p. 151). Those circumstances indicate that the phenomenon of acculturation is prevalent and could be sensed under multiple conditions based on their different social and political determines. The results came after acculturation may be different depends on which situation does the acculturation exist. When the international students study abroad, they will need to manage acculturation to not only the host culture but also communities composed of students from other different cultures. For the international students who study in Hawai‘i, the dominant culture can be both the US culture and the local culture. In addition to handling both the US and the culture of Hawai‘i, the students at the East-West Center immerse themselves in a culturally diverse environment. Although the dominant groups in the East-West Center tend to demonstrate Asian and Pacific cultures due to the great number of students that are from the two regions, international students may still experience certain degrees of stress, conflicts and cultural shock during the acculturation in this extremely diverse community. Under the circumstance, the East-West Center should be responsible for the moderation of the acculturation process for both the dominant cultures and non-dominant cultures.

Hawai‘i is highly different from other states in the United States due to its history, location, and culture. “The history of Hawai‘i can be traced back at least 1,500 years when Polynesians from the Marquesas Islands and Tahiti came to live in the Hawaiian islands and became Hawaiians” (Fu & Heaton, 2000, p. 45). In the early 19th century, more and more immigrants from Asia, Europe, and America came to Hawai‘i for the plantation and sugar industry. At 1959, Hawai‘i officially became to one of the states of the United States. According to the data of US Census Bureau of the population in Hawai‘i at 2016, single race people account for 76% of the population, including ethnic groups such as white (25%), African American

(1.8%), American Indian or Alaska Native (0.2%), Asian (38%), Native Hawaiian and other Pacific islanders (10.2%) and other races (1 %). People who have two or more races accounted for 23.8% of the population. The culture in Hawai‘i is very diverse not only because of its history but also because of its location. As a result, comparing with going to colleges at other states in the United States, studying in Hawai‘i may lower the level of negative emotions for some groups of international students, for example of those from Japan, Korea, Philippine, and Pacific Islands when they are adapting to the society. Furthermore, International students in Hawai‘i have great opportunities to experience various cultures as well as the unique Hawaiian culture. On the other hand, they could also experience conflicts when dealing with various cultures in Hawai‘i.

To acculturate to the larger society in Hawai‘i, many international students have to start by adapting to the new communities (e.g. campus or dormitory) as they need to involve in the adjustment between home culture and host culture. A new culture can be learned, recognized and adopted when going through the process of cultural adaptation. International students are expected to change their behavior when they deal with problems which are associated with different culture during acculturation. Therefore, they may have a hard time adapting to new communities as they need to handle conflicts, argument, depression, anxiety, or chaos between their host culture and new culture. The East-West Center, founded by US Congress in 1960, has served as an educational institution to advance the relations between the US, Asia and Pacific islands by organizing multiple programs and international events. The center is adjacent to the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. As a result, the East-West Center has affiliated with many international students in the university through providing resources for collaboration and communication not only on academic works but also in their daily life. This research aimed to,

first, investigate the role and mission of the East-West Center, discussing how could the center provide service and resource for the international students, serving as the moderation in their process of acculturation to local culture. Second, focused on how can the events and values that the East-West Center has been delivered help international students to communicate with others in the culturally-diverse community. Last but not least, examined the integration of different cultures among the student group.

## **CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 ACCULTURATION**

To define what is acculturation, we have to know what ‘culture’ is? People, as the main elements, have composed the society. The shared and learned patterns of thought and behavior of the people form the very culture in society. As a result, cultures are the ways people live in the society. Hofstede (1980) treats culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguish the member of one human group to another.” He points out that culture includes systems of values, which build up blocks of culture (p.25). Values can shape the culture and culture can shape the individuals. In order to accept and adapt to a different culture, an individual must gain a certain level of understanding of the host culture by learning its behaviors and values. Take immigration as an example, they must first learn about the symbolic meaning system of the host society from various acculturation pathways to acculturate into the culture of residence. They are required to take some modification since what they have obtained from their culture of origin may be inadequate as they access a new society. Meanwhile, immigrants open themselves to different aspects of the host culture and interpret their experiences in many different ways based on their original cultural backgrounds (Glazer & Moynihan, 1970). “As individuals become acculturated, they begin to adopt aspects of both the objective and the subjective culture of another group” (Triandis et al., 1982, p. 141). According to their research, subjective culture contains nonmaterial elements such as norms, roles, belief systems, laws and values. On the other hand, objective culture includes the material aspects of the culture like tools, foods, and material products.

Furthermore, the definition presented by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) explains: “acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (p. 149). Berry (1990) suggested that acculturation is a neutral term in principle, which indicates that change may take place in one way or in both groups. Typically, acculturation tends to cause more changes in one of the groups (termed the acculturating group here) than in the other. People who leave their home cultures and enter a different society (i.e., a host culture) may experience a shift in their social networks, language skills, preferred media consumption and cultural identities. Acculturation can be taken as an assessment to analyze and evaluate the identification of a society with diverse cultures. The impact of acculturation also determines the advantages and disadvantage of the society as well as the individuals. Under the influence of acculturation, individuals or groups are motivated to change and go through some process to adapt the society different than the one they originally came from (Stephenson, 2000).

Berry (1997) defined four strategies of acculturation by examining the behaviors and attitude of acculturation when different cultural groups, as well as their individuals encounter the issues between the dominant and non-dominant situation: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. From the point of non-dominant group, assimilation indicates that when people prefer to contact and interact with the dominant culture and maintain very little of their own cultural heritage. Separation describes people who place values on holding on to their own culture so that they are reluctant to involve and interact with other groups. Marginalization happens when neither cultural can be maintained by the non-dominant group and nor social contact within the larger society is involved. Integration happens when there are benefits in

maintaining both cultural but still demonstrate the interaction. That is to say, integration can be successfully reached when there is mutual accommodation in both cultures, which is the most ideal strategy in the acculturation process (Berry, 2006). Moreover, Berry and Hou (2016) believe that integration is the most common strategy, which can help to increase over length of time lived in the new society. They studied the acculturation and well-being by using the four strategies to inspect immigrants' sense of belonging such as a general feeling of inclusion and the desire to be close to a relevant social group. They address their finding that when immigrants can experience greater wellbeing when they engage in both cultures than when they have little or no cultural engagement.

In Liu's (2012) research, he took Furham's (2011) culture shock as a reference, explaining that there are many recommendations to deal with culture shock by taking international students as an example. According to Furham (2011), "many students feel classic alienation especially feelings of powerlessness, meaningless, and social estrangement while being surrounded by the 'superficial pleasantries' of their hosts" (p. 89). He also suggests that, when learning the culture, ethnicity identity of international students is considered as a concern which associated with gender issues, staff-student relationships and learning preferences, and styles of different groups. Furthermore, some international students incline to join the cross-national networks as a result of having studied abroad and for the mediating function that these students and their networks can bridge the various cultures to the community they have been exposed. Thus, besides providing support and resources to students' culture-learning, institution should meanwhile help those students to comprehend and value their own identity in their progress of acculturation.

## **2.2 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE HAWAI‘I**

International education has become more prevalent around the world for years since it has provided individuals the path to tertiary education. Individuals who want to study abroad are composed of different age groups and different nationalities. Some of them may sojourn to the new country with their spouses and children (Singaravelu, 2007). The United States has been the most popular country for international students to pursue higher education or a better career. It is shown that international students' enrollments in undergraduate and graduate programs in the United States have risen 50% since 2004 to 2005 (Institute of International Education, 2012), and there was growth from 4% to 10% in some institution of the total enrollments in one year (Simmons, 2013). According to the Migration Policy Institution (2018), the United States remains the country of choice for the largest number of international students, which hosts about 1.1 million of the 4.6 million enrolled worldwide in 2017. Hawai‘i is one of the iconic states that has been highly considered by a great number of international students, especially Asian students, when making their decision for school selection in the United States. Due to the uniqueness of Hawai‘i, which stands in the Pacific Ocean and plays as a crucial role as the intersection of different regions such as Asia, Pacific islands, and mainland United States of America, Hawai‘i is known for its cultural and ethnic plurality. As the middle point between the East and the West, Hawai‘i has complicated history due to the influence of American culture and migration, which lead to varied opinions about the detailed aspects of the host culture, even for the local people (Chi, 2014). Furthermore, the immigration, as well as military culture in Hawai‘i also attributes to the demographic diversity, serving as one of the reasons that attract international students to sojourn in Hawai‘i. According to the Department of Business, Economic



Development & Tourism Research and Economic Analysis Division (2016), in 2015, 35 institutions responded, representing approximately 10,100 international students while their 2016 survey received responses from 31 institutions, representing a total of nearly 12,200 students. Technically, international students cannot be categorized as ‘immigrant’ since they possess F1 or J1 visa instead of a green card. However, there are about 85,000 international students have the chance to receive H1-B visa and continue their careers in the US after graduation. Moreover, more than 45 % of international graduate students extend their visa to work in the big cities or the same areas as their college or university. Although international students only fit for non-immigrant policy in the US, they can still be viewed as sojourners or potential immigrants.

There are many academic institutions in Hawai‘i and the largest one is the University of Hawai‘i system, which includes 3 universities and 7 community colleges. The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa is definitely one of the ideal choices for students come from different countries to experience American culture as well as local culture in Hawai‘i. The data from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa shows that the international students account for 6% of the total student population, which makes the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa the most diverse university in terms of students and faculty, with a student-body Diversity Index of 76 — a full 22 points greater than the index for the U.S. population as of 2010 — and a faculty index of 61, regarded to The Chronicle of Higher Education (2016). According to the data from International Student Service (ISS) at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, there were 1,005 international students including graduate students, undergraduate students, and non-degree students that came from 83 countries. Among the international student body, there were around 538 graduate students in master and doctoral programs (International Student Service [ISS], 2018).

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa has rich resource and service for international students. For international students in the United States, they shall not only deal with academic studies but also the pressure came from the adjustment to the environment. Gómez, Urzúa and Glass (2014) suggests that recreational activities could be very influential in the socialization and integration of international students. They study the general relationship between leisure and its impact on international student adjustment in university regards to other scholars. The results can be associated with the fact that as international students become more acculturated, they perceive fewer constraints to leisure activities (e.g., On-campus sport and off-campus socialization). Their results demonstrate the strong effects of social support in facilitating international students’ adaptation. Moreover, it is asserted that recreation participation had no negative effect on their academic adjustment, providing evidence of the objection to the concern of incoming international students’ academic performance being weakened by extracurricular activities since academic performance is one of the most significant factors of depression for international students (Zhao, et al., 2005).

Trice (2004) suggests that assisting international students’ interaction with American students in a casual way can break down cultural and language barriers. Universities might sponsor programs that enable international students to explore a controversial issue from several cultural perspectives to attract both international and local students. Besides, universities or institutions should become aware that there are students who not only not befriended with local students but also students from other countries and they do not attend campus cultural events. Consequently, staff members in institutions should not only providing opportunities for international students to interact with Americans but also need to motivate the individuals to experience different cultures and establish relationship with students from around the world by

taking part in cross-cultural activities. International students' exposure to American culture could be demonstrated on behaviors, which is related to satisfaction with social and community relations. As a result, institutions that offer services and support to international students are encouraged to hold events to increase their interaction with local culture as well as other cultures, such as orientation, cultural fest, potluck, field trip, or workshop, helping them to build bonds to the community and society. As the scholars suggest, international students' first experience with the universities is likely to be with personnel who assist their transition (Perrucci & Hu, 1995). International students' interaction with university services can help them to reduce levels of uncertainty and anxiety about their new situation. Thus, international students can adapt to the new environment more smoothly with the facilitation from such services on campus (Gao & Gudykunst, 1990). Moreover, Perrucci and Hu (1995) also believe that there are four determines that contributes to international students' level of satisfaction with academic program, academic appointment, and social relations. Such determines includes social status (gender and marital status), individual resource (language skills, financial status, grades, self-esteem, aspiration), social resource (exposure to U.S culture, contact with U.S students, help from co-nationals) and social context (U.S attitude toward students' countries and discrimination). One of the purposes of this research is to examine if the East-West Center has the capability to deal with some of the factors in the four determines, which could increase the satisfaction and provide the international students with more advantages when they try to adapt to Hawai'i, or United States.

## **2.3 THE EAST-WEST CENTER**

Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder (2006) recommend the governments to be the support and encouragement for immigrants to pursue the integration path in acculturation positively by accepting two kinds (home culture and host culture) of attitudes or orientations among immigrant group as well as the larger society in their study of the acculturation of youth immigrants. The authors also believe that governments need to develop programs or policies for the general population to raise their acceptance of cultural diversity and the participation of diverse peoples in the life of large society, such as public education about the value of diversity, and anti-discrimination and equity laws.

The East-West Center, founded and sponsored by the US government, plays an essential role in advancing cross-cultural relations among student group similar to how Berry et al. (2006) suggest the government should do for immigrants' acculturation in their article. The East-West Center demonstrate its mission through various programs like research program, professional development program, educational program. The history of the East-West Center can be traced back to 1960:

The East-West Center was established by the United States Congress in 1960 as a national educational institution to foster better relations and understanding among the peoples of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific islands through programs of cooperative study, training, and research. The Center was established in Hawai'i based on the conclusions reached by Congress and the U.S. Department of State that Hawai'i offered special advantages for a national institution with an Asia Pacific focus that could not be duplicated anywhere else in the country. (About EWC: Mission and Organization Overview, 2018)

The East-West Center (can be referred to ‘EWC’ or ‘the Center’ ) contributes to providing a great variety of resources such as scholarships, conferences, seminars, programs, and researches related to Asian Pacific or Hawaiian cultures. EWC took the responsibility of connecting western cultures and eastern cultures, which is the reason the government passed the bill to build “a Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West in Hawai‘i.” For the students studying in the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, EWC offers fellowships and affiliate programs to develop their academic experiences as well as their insights in intercultural communication with multi-angles.

The Center defines diversity as difference in race, religion, nationality, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability, political affiliation, socio-economic class, and geographic location. Inclusion is the way in which people engage one another by honoring and speak out to different views, beliefs, experiences, and ways of being. This approach creates a welcoming, participatory environment of mutual respect among the EWC program participants, staff, alumni, institutional partners, and other stakeholders in the global community. The inclusiveness of the Center facilitates the diversity to address critical regional issues, achieve improved outcomes and impact, and to reach our strategic goals.

(About EWC, 2017)

The East-West Center has well-organized staff and scholars from a great variety of expertise areas such as applied Asian studies, leadership education, public diplomacy, global communication, agriculture, environmental law, climate change, sustainable development, etc. The diversity of staff facilitates EWC to enhance research, policy, and communication on the

national relations between the US and the other countries, especially those located in the Asian-Pacific region.

According to Dr. Richard R Vuylsteke, the incumbent President of the East-West Center (R. Vuylsteke, personal communication, Feb 15, 2019), the influence that the East-West Center wants to pass on to its students is not only to “be a catalyst for other people's success” but also “be able to be successful in cross-national and cross-cultural environments.” The purpose of establishing East-West Center student affiliate program, which under the charge of EWC educational program, is to offer externally funded students and self-funded students at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa the chances to take part in the Center’s educational programs and leadership development opportunities. At EWC students affiliate program, all participants are required to live in the two dormitory buildings: Hale Manoa and Hale Kuahine (East-West Center Student Affiliate Program, 2018). There are also other graduate students or exchange scholars that stay at the two buildings but who do not take part in the Affiliate Program with EWC. Moreover, all participants of the EWC educational programs are required to volunteer for certain hours as community service (within or outside of the EWC community, and ranging from 10 to 45 hours per semester depending on the type of the program). Besides student affiliate program, various events that feature cultural-focus issues so that The Center often invites scholars, experts or entrepreneurs to boost the interaction and academic performance of the students. Stanton (2008) believes that “higher education in United States was founded with a civic mission that calls on the faculty, students and administrators to apply their skills, resources and talents to address important issues affecting communities, the nation and the world” (p.19). The Center organizes many social and educational events such as Wednesday Evening Seminar (WES), Community Building Institute (CBI), International Graduate Student Conference(IGSC),

arts exhibitions, and international workshops in order to advance community engagement by building connections and relations through graduate students' expertise. Some of the events are arranged and host by the student's self-elected board known as the East-West Center Participant Association (EWCPA) like Intercultural Potluck, movies night, East-West Fest, Concert on the Lawn, etc. (Chi, 2014). Both international students and American students are able to derive a great opportunity for cross-cultural experience within the Center. As a result, the events, seminar, and workshops, could help the students to gain various aspects and perceptions toward a diverse society like Hawai'i. The official events in EWC can be roughly categorized based on three dimensions:

1. Community and local engagement:

For example, CBI, internship and community service (volunteering), etc. This kind of events aims to advance students' civic engagement in EWC and local society with the anticipation of development in peer supportiveness, community building, dedication to society, and local issues. Students acquire opportunities to offer their services to both EWC and other local organizations in Hawai'i.

2. Academic and research enhancement:

For example, Teacher Workshop: Cultural Legacies: Transmitting Knowledge and Preserving Traditions, East-West Center International Graduate Student Conference, Illustrated Talk: "Shaloha: The Jews of Hawai'i", Pacific Tongues: Poetry in Oceania, etc. Events related to academic and research are very interdisciplinary. Since the students are from different departments and have different interests, EWC invites prominent scholars and speakers who specialize in various fields of knowledge. Moreover, it also holds

international conferences and exchange programs, encouraging cross-cultural communication in higher education, especially on the topics associated with Asia Pacific research. Academic and research events focus on enhancing performance with inspiration and enlightenment from diverse educational experiences.

### 3. Student life and development:

For example, Intercultural Potluck, East-West Fest, The Ho‘opuka celebration, Concerts on the Lawn, EWC Holiday Craft Fair, etc. This kind of events are usually organized by EWCPA and composed of activities that based on cross-cultural aspects. The events are relatively informal in contrary to the community and local engaged events or academic events because the purpose of them is to enrich students group with more communication. Affiliated students are able to learn about different cultures as well as different people through participating in such events. Those activities are beneficial for students to form bonds with each other and also help the East-West Center to promote the value in its cultural diversity.

Besides, there are synthetic events that contains characteristics from more than one category, being hard to tell exactly what type of events they belong to. For example, WES. It is obligatory for students who attend the affiliate program to participate in WES for at least two semesters. It takes place weekly on Wednesday as a two-hour seminar and each seminar has a specific topic, mostly focusing on Hawaiian, Pacific, and Asian culture. The content includes business, health, arts, sports, music, theatre, history, literature, environmental issues, urban planning, social work, etc. Students participants will be randomly divided into few groups. In each seminar, two speakers with the professions in the topic will be invited to deliver their



experiences and stories. Afterward, participants have to do activities such as giving feedback or sharing their opinions with other group members.

What is more, the East-West Center provides the platform for international students to learn and adapt multi-angles in acculturation process by including not only material aspects but also the values or non-material subjects from other people. In addition to enhance the recognition and adaptation of different cultures, the East-West Center has played as the role for the integration of the whole community, creating a culturally-friendly environment to unify the student body and build a strong connection. Living in Hale Manoa and Hale Kuahine, they are encouraged to devote themselves in the social network through organizing events, experience-sharing, problem-solving, offering support and assistance to each other. Inevitably, conflicts and culture shocks may coexist under the circumstance. Thus, the two research questions can examine the communication in a culturally-diverse community. Meanwhile, this study helps people to gain better realization about the process of integration among those students through their affiliation with the Center.

### **CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In my studies, I examined if the East-West Center can be served as the binding capital as well as the bridging capital for the international students at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. The purpose was to analyze the acculturation under the influence of the educational organization. Typically, international students’ acculturation process takes place and constructed on campus by community such as host family, fraternity, sorority, on-campus work (since international students are restricted from working off campus) and sport team. However, the East-West Center is a relatively special organization since it is a government-found institution that independently works as the research agency, which dedicates in public diplomacy and international relations in Asia Pacific region while sometimes engages in cooperation with the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa for some academic projects. The East-West Center is neither academy nor a private institution, which makes it so peculiar to function in international students’ acculturation.

This research would study the elements that affect acculturation from a few dimensions. First, the international students who participate in the affiliate program. Targeting the student group offered me a chance to acquire information such as their attitude and behaviors in the EWC community, especially their opinions to the events. Second, EWC staff members who work in educational program department. Since this research aimed to enhance cross-cultural communication and promote cultural values in EWC, the techniques and the professions that provided by the employees in helping the students to learn from multi-culture and adapt to the environment are crucial. Moreover, students’ positive interaction with the staff might motivate students to reinforce their willingness to integrate. Therefore, exploring the pattern of

communication in EWC and the staff members' contribution to the acculturation process could possibly enrich experiences to help students to deal with a foreign environment.

RQ 1 : What are the roles of EWC in students' acculturation ?

- RQ1a: How does EWC train and evaluate their staff?
- RQ1b: How does EWC offer resources and assistance for students to integrate to local culture?
- RQ1c: How does EWC offer resources and assistance for students to integrate to EWC community?

The ultimate vision of the East-West Center is to build the bridge of communication between the United States and the Asia Pacific. Under its substance, EWC Student Affiliate Program could be seen as the bridge connecting students from different places as well as the facilitator to their academic research, financial support, service learning, community engagement, and multicultural immersion. Students who affiliate with the EWC can seek extra resources other than ones already offered by the university. Therefore, EWC staffs are required to be qualified to assist students with the center's resources and their expertise. It is not an easy task since students are from different countries, studying in different departments, and having different plans in their career. Moreover, it is inevitably that they will suffer from acculturative stress, stemming from physiological and social problems during acculturation (Berry, 1992). As a matter of fact, it is possible that each case is unique and individuals' request for assistance may vary. Hence, it is crucial that the staff can provide assistance varied to different needs and dispense the resources equally. Due to ethnic diversity of student group in EWC, it is highly

suggested that the staff acquire great ability in intercultural communication and being trained with intercultural insights.

RQ 2 : How do the students feel about the role of EWC playing in their acculturation to Hawai'i ?

- RQ2a: How do students deal with cross-cultural interaction within and outside EWC?
- RQ2b: How do students learn more about local culture in Hawai'i through EWC ?

The major discussion here was whether EWC could help students' integration by perhaps easing culture shock, reducing homesickness, strengthening academic performance, building a social network, or increase their understanding of other cultures. These were the key questions that motivate the research in this study. How does the goal of EWC Student Affiliate Program match the purpose of this research? To answer these questions, this study probed into the public sphere of students and staff in EWC. The case study was based on interviews with key informant between 2018 and 2019, as well as an analysis of student life and official events. The case study illustrated the factors that affect students' integration into the multicultural community and their connection to local culture.

## **CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 INTERVIEW**

This study examined the situation in EWC based on Berry's (1997) acculturation strategies, which indicates that acculturation can be 'freely' chosen and successfully pursued in a dominated society that is open to cultural diversity. It explored the acculturation phenomenon between a multicultural student group and an educational institution which contributes to cross-cultural communication among the community (p. 10). Berry also mentions the importance of education in acculturation, stating that education can attune migrants to features of the society into which they settle and it can lead to more resources for them so it will bring merits to positive adaptation to a new culture (p. 22).

Based on Berry's insights in acculturation, I probed into students' acculturation in a national educational institution located in one of the most culturally-diverse states in the United States. In order to obtain more data throughout the study, this research also examined students' comments about various activities host by the East-West Center including seminars, workshops, orientation, etc. Since the communication patterns in the East-West Center is highly liberal and diverse, it required not only a single method but also participation and observation to expand on further understanding. In order to study the international students and the East-West Center, I employed interviews and participant observation as the methodologies. However, since I am also the student participants of EWC Student Affiliate Program, I may possess some bias during the investigation of this topic. As an insider, I have already known some of the student participants as well as staffs in EWC. Moreover, I had attended activities such as CBI, WES, East-West Fest and other events personally. Hence, my own experiences in the EWC community may affect my

perceptions when engaging in research with peers and staffs in EWC. Nevertheless, I noticed that it is extremely important to keep myself in a neutral standpoint so I would try my best to eliminate any personal opinions in the study.

As Arksey and Knight (1999) assert “interviewing is a powerful way of helping people to make explicit things that have hitherto been implicit to articulate their perceptions, feelings and understandings.” (p.33) Interview allows researchers to derive information with multiple angles from participants’ memory, experiences, oral expression, and belief based on their own responses. Avoiding the risks of unstructured interview, which the interviewees could possibly give long, detailed, or rambling stories, semi-structured interview seems to be a better choice since the interviews are more manageable and the conversation can be organized around the interview guide (Arksey & Knight, 1999). Therefore, the approach involved inductive approach by conducting one-on-one sitting, semi-structured interviews by using lists of open-ended questions, granting the interviewees more flexibility to come up with their opinion and stories during the process. Conversational follow-up questions would be applied in case more information is needed. There were two target population of my interview in this study.

The first group was the student body that affiliated with the East-West Center: international students who are from other countries than the United States. I selected 7 participants from 7 different countries (See Table 1), which consisted of 5 male students and 2 female students. They are all studying at UH for Ph.D degrees. Since Ph.D students tend to stay in the US for long term or have already spent few years here, they might possess greater motivation to adapt to the local society. The second group of respondents (See Table 2) was Dr. Richard R. Vuylsteke, the President of the East-West Center, and 2 staffs who currently work in the East-West Center education program, which included a male and a female. I chose the two

staffs in education program due to the fact that they are the primary personnel the students often contact with for assistance in their daily life. President Vuylsteke himself is the alumnus of the East-West Center and he shared his valuable experience in cross-cultural communication as well as his expectation to the East-West Center. Except for President Vulysteke, who agreed to reveal his identity in the research, other respondents would be given with codes to maintain the confidentiality. Some students' information such as nationality or race (i.e., European and African students; there are very few students from Europe and Africa in the program) would be omitted in order to better protect their privacy.

#### **4.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION**

Participant observation literally empowers observing through participating such that the self becomes the primary research tool. To make an embodied and visceral journey into the socially and culturally distinctive way of life of a particular group of people, the goal of participant observation allows researchers to experience the way to inhabit their environment, live their social relations, understand their preoccupations and appreciate their values (Evans, 2012). Lindlof and Taylor (2002) also asserts that "the validity of participant observation derives from researchers' having been there" (p. 135). As a student who also join the Student Affiliate Program in the East-West Center, I took part in the observation of students' communication as a participant observer so I could derive further exploration and deeper involvement through being a member of the student group. For this research, I conducted two participant observations for different purposes. In the observations, I included graduate students and staff members as the subjects. The first one was kitchen observation, which focused on interpersonal communication

between student groups. The second one was observation in a staff-student meeting, which paid more attention to the interaction between the two groups. The third observation in The Exchange could lead me to students' reaction and feedback toward this weekly program in the East-West Center.

I identified and chose the kitchens (including the seats area) in Hale Manoa and Hale Kuahine as the ideal locations for research due to the fact that the kitchen is an essential place for students to cook and dine with others during lunch or dinner time. I spent an hour between 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. observing as the role of participant in 12<sup>th</sup> floor Ewa kitchen at Hale Manoa and an hour from 6 p.m. to 7p.m. at the kitchens in Hale Kuahine. The reason for my selection to the 12<sup>th</sup> floor Ewa kitchen is because it is located at co-ed floor, which could increase the diversity of my research. In the process, I acted inconspicuously, cooking and having dinner as other residents did around the kitchen, so other people would not aware of themselves as the subjects being studied in the research. By putting myself in the situation, I was able to get first-hand information directly. Since the goal of the observation was to examine the integration and cross-cultural communication among the student group, I was going to explore the interaction of the residents including how they share their food, how they gossip, how they sit together and have dinner, how they greet each other, what kind of food are they eating, who are they talking to, etc. Hence, it is important that I take field notes about their communication behaviors (verbal and nonverbal communication) during the observation.

Another participant observation was in one staff-student meeting for an event, which gave me a chance to look into the relationship between the staff members and the student participants when they were coordinating on a discussion of events, seminars, or student affairs. Staffs from the educational program would work with few student participants as a team on



organizing, planning, recruiting, advertising, communicating, training for the event. The meeting takes place once a week. As one of the student facilitators in the team, it was easier for me to get access to the spot and observe their behaviors.

For this research, I utilized those field notes as the content to reinforce my study. The field notes would be demonstrated in context and used as the further explanation to prove or giving examples for the results I uncovered from the interview data.

#### **4.3 PURPOSIVE SAMPLING FOR THE INTERVIEW**

The idea of purposive sampling is to concentrate on people with particular characteristics who will better be able to assist with the relevant research. In contrast to random techniques, purposive sampling does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. Therefore, subjects are selected based on researcher's study purpose and expectation that each participant will provide unique or rich information of value to the study (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The researcher who employs purposive sampling has to determine that members of the community hold the information he/she asks for and which needs a high degree of interpretation regarding (Tongco, 2007). The goal of my research was to examine the role and mission of the East-West Center in students' acculturation. To ensure the credibility of my research, I could only select international students who affiliated with East-West Center and staff members who currently work at East-West Center. Moreover, in order to analyze cross-cultural interaction and integration, the diversity of the samples should be evident enough to include a greater variety on ethnicity, educational levels and job categories. Therefore, I aimed to evenly select students from

different countries and staff in relevant positions to be the samples for my interviews. Etikan et al. (2016) note that there are seven types of purposive sampling: Maximum Variation Sampling(MVS), Homogeneous Sampling, Typical Case Sampling (TCS), Extreme/Deviant Case Sampling, Critical Case Sampling, Total Population Sampling(TPS), Expert Sampling.

I chose MVS as the method in my study due to the fact that my research covered the analysis of an educational institution and specific behaviors in relation to it. Etikan et al. (2016) identify MVS:

The idea behind MVS is to look at a subject from all available angles, thereby achieving a greater understanding. Also known as "Heterogeneous Sampling", it involves selecting candidates across a broad spectrum relating to the topic of study. For example, if one was researching an education program would include students who hated the program, students classed as "typical" and students who excelled. This type of sampling is useful when a random sample is not taken, for instance, if the sample pool is too small. (p. 3)

In EWC student community, it is assumed that individuals are categorized into different groups based on their nationality, gender and the time they have lived in the United States.

The student interviewees are from Japan, Taiwan, Iran, Philippine, Africa, and Europe (See Table 1). For EWC officials (See Table2), I interviewed President Vuylsteke and the other 2 staff members (A.H and S.V) in education program. Interviewees were shown with researcher's personal credential and certificate that states academic affiliation when initiating the interview. Each interviewee who agrees to take part in the interview were asked to read and sign an informed consent form prior to participating. All interviews were audio-recorded and were expected to vary in length from 45 minutes to an hour. The qualitative research methods enable

me to understand the cases with more details and deeper perception, reinforcing the framework. Researching through the analysis, it would enhance the credibility by providing a more compelling evidence base for project evaluation.

#### **4.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

I used inductive thematic analysis to analyze my data from the interview transcription. Braun and Clarke (2006) assert that “thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data.” (p.5) Thematic analysis focuses on reporting the patterns of themes across qualitative data and describe the data set in details (p.6). Inductive thematic research marks the importance of data themselves as the factors that identify the themes instead of being driven by the researcher’s theoretical interest in the topics.

## **CHAPTER 5. RESULTS**

### **5.1 MANAGERS AND THEMES**

In this research, all the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed in verbatim way. After the collection of data from interviews, I took a few steps to organize the raw data largely based on Boyatzis' (1998) approaches for analysis in this case. First, I did a thorough review of the verbatim transcription and marked the words or statements that related my research interests. Next, I extracted the marked information and categorized them into four clusters, which would be the 'managers' of the data. Then, I developed different themes based on the managers. After refining and rechecking the themes, I examined the transcription again and arranged the words, terms, statements to each theme they match to. For example, 'indigenous culture' would be categorized to the manager 'learning local culture in Hawai'i' and 'I experienced indigenous culture in CBI' would be situated to the theme that describes 'The culture in Hawai'i - After arriving Hawai'i.'

#### **5.1.1 MANAGERS**

Managers (Table 3, 4, 5, 6) were built on a few aspects I chose from the raw information: host culture (subjective culture and objective culture), home culture (subjective culture and objective culture), interaction with different cultures, interaction with the staff members, personal interests/professions and community activities. The definitions of the managers present

the gist and the disciplines of each manager. Indicators are keywords or examples in the data that could be related to the managers. To some degree, managers could be seen as the outline of the information. On the other hand, themes could be viewed as the elements that identify the data in managers with more specific messages, which would further categorize and refine the information. Manager 1 stands for ‘the local culture in Hawai‘i’, including people’s impression of various aspects in indigenous culture, tourism, language, history, natural resources. Manager 2 presents information in relation to ‘home culture’ such as respondents’ awareness in their identities, backgrounds, races, and nationalities. Manager 3, on the other hand, is their ‘experience in diversity’, which indicates individuals’ communication with different cultures. Manager 4 is about students’ ‘academic’ experiences, which shows their engagement in academic events, their academic performance, their evaluation to scholarly programs in the East-West Center.

### 5.1.2 THEMES

Based on the managers I extracted from the interview responses, I arranged the managed information and came up with five themes with a few sub-themes. Each theme could be connected to a single or multiple managers, illustrating a phenomenon of students’ acculturation that is formed by certain corpus of behaviors or notions. The themes are driven by the data from managers but the themes can exhibit the information more specifically. These themes are important for the work on the analysis process in this research since they could possibly indicate the results and elaborate the arguments in my study.

The themes were used to classify certain information from the interviewees’ response. By applying the themes, the evidences and traits of acculturation in the data would be regarded and

therefore be examined for the research questions. From the interview with managers, the first theme that emerged is participants' knowledge of the local culture in Hawai'i, which can be presented by Manager 1 and Manager 3. According to the data, I concluded two sub-themes: 'preconceived understandings' and 'posterior understandings.' The former one describes the primitive impression of the local cultures in Hawai'i and the latter one displays the knowledge about the local culture in Hawai'i they have learned through the East-West Center. 'The knowledge of local culture' can be viewed as the sign that shows individuals' improvement of perception of the culture in Hawai'i since sub-theme 'preconceived understanding' shows a more stereotypical impression of the culture in Hawai'i such as beach, tropical island, relaxation whereas the 'posterior understanding' points to the advanced knowledge of local culture in Hawai'i with refined information in indigenous culture, historical background, Native Hawaiian language and traditional belief.

The second theme was defined as 'cultural diversity' from the data, which indicates the experiences in interaction with different cultures and the immersion in multicultural environment. 'Cultural diversity' can be shown by Manager 1 and Manager 3 because individuals are able to experience the diversity from the contacts with both local culture in Hawai'i and other cultures in the East-West Center. The third theme 'awareness of home culture' can be found from the information related to Manager 2 and Manager 3. Both themes can present students' communicational behaviors in a multicultural environment while also scrutinize the maintenance of their identity.

Regarded to the response, the fourth theme emerged as the evaluation of the activities and programs in the East-West Center. There are three sub-themes: 'positive feedback/opinion', 'non-positive feedback/opinions' and 'academic/scholarly'. These sub-themes remark students'

feelings toward the events and the program. Manager 2, 3 and 4 show ‘positive feedback/opinion’ when the respondents mentioned they derive positive experiences in learning different cultures, presenting their home cultures and engaging in the EWC community. Information that contains ‘non-positive feedback/opinion’ and ‘academic/scholarly’ were often brought out with Manager 4, which the students considered some events (e.g. WES) either ‘too scholarly’, ‘not related to my life in Hawai‘i’, ‘not helping’, or ‘the exposure to different fields of studies’, ‘related to my research’.

The fifth theme is ‘community engagement’, which refers to students’ involvement and accommodation in the East-West Center. Shown by Manager 1,2,3,4, this theme can be seen as a crucial factor that determines students’ adaptation to the East-West Center based on certain values such as ‘ohana, friendliness, and tolerance.

## **5.2 THE EXAMINATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

According to the analysis of the interviews and the observation, cross-cultural communication can be established through CBI, dorm life, and other events in the East-West Center based on the heterogeneous student body and its concentration on cultural values. The CBI, as the orientation, provides information to local culture and is also the primary occasion for students to make friends initially, which makes it an important asset for the students who want to engage in local society and the EWC community (RQ 1b, 1c and 2b).

WES (or The Exchange), on the other hand, seems less resonated to students' life although it still delivers the knowledge of indigenous culture and Asian Pacific culture through some topics. Most people felt that the WES is too academic and sometimes does not match their interests. However, there were a few interviewees that described WES as a place to exchange opinions and reinforce their self-identity (RQ 1c and 2a). Activities that highly related to students' daily life or leisure time are most popular and can greatly create opportunities for intercultural communication, like Intercultural Potluck, East-West Fest, Concert on the Lawn, hiking, cooking, sharing food, and attending choir. Engagement in the community motivates them to learn other cultures and to behave appropriately to different cultures (RQ 1c and 2a).

Another significant influence on international students' acculturation is the assistance from the staff members. Regarding the observation, the factors that determine the relation between students and staff members in the East-West Center stand on their communication and the supportiveness from the staffs. The background or the experience of the staffs are also very crucial especially when they need to deal with students from different cultures and navigate them



to the life in both the EWC community and Hawai‘i. Nevertheless, the East-West Center does not have official training program for the staff members now (RQ 1a).

However, when doing the research, I noticed that student respondents hardly mentioned other activities that also aim to associate them with the local culture such as Mentoring Program (it allows students to link with local EWC alumni or professions for their career interests), community service learning (to work as volunteers within or outside the East-West Center), or Host Family Program (this program allows students to sign up for the local host families so the students can experience different ways of life through entertainments like having dinner, celebrating festivals, and playing sports with their host families). Engaging in local community is an important and direct way to learn about the culture in Hawai‘i. Besides CBI and WES, the East-West Center should pay more attention to students’ interaction with the local society and actively invite them to participate in such programs. On the other hand, the student affiliates are suggested to better explore and utilize the resources in the East-West Center to establish their social connection in Hawai‘i.

To sum up, states like separation, assimilation or marginalization can scarcely be found among the respondents I interviewed. The interviewees remarked that being surrounded by various cultural background can keep their mind open and offer them more approaches to access different cultures. For the adaptation to the local culture, they addressed their experience in learning Hawaiian culture from both the events and the people in the East-West Center is the most efficient way to advance their insights into local society.

### 5.3 INTERVIEW RESULTS

Among the data I collected from the interviews, I chose parts of the information for analysis based on the factors that would affect international students' acculturation, such as the contact with different cultures, interpersonal relationship, self-evaluation of their home cultures, appreciation of their self-identity and their accommodation to other cultures. The themes were used to indicate certain information in the interviewees' response.

Events like CBI and WES (The Exchange) were addressed since they are the most important programs in student activities and because they are parts of the obligation for the student participants in the East-West Center. Dormitory was another focus in this research due to the multicultural environment it has provided to the students. Living with people from different nations could be considered a good attribution to cross-cultural interaction as well as interpersonal communication.

Zhang and Huang (2013) took the international students in Nanjing Medical University, Nanjing, China as example, suggesting that language ability, host-culture effects (e.g. learning Chinese culture, behavioral changes within Chinese culture, similarity between Chinese culture and academic, adaption to Chinese educational institution, adaption to Chinese culture) and their dependence on social resources (e.g. experiences in interacting with other international students, interacting with groups from home culture, interacting with Chinese students, evaluation to Chinese faculty, evaluation to the campus/accommodation, adjustment to the life in China, engaging in off-campus community ) as the three crucial factors that determine if the international students can adapt to the cross-culture society.

In my case, the university already required international students for language eligibility tests (TOFEL, IELTS, GRE, GMAT) and had them to take additional ELI (English Language

Institution) classes, which would be able to enhance their English proficiency. I assumed that the East-West Center would be an ideal place for the exposure to local culture and different cultures. With all the data, I paid more attention on the EWC facilities and programs that help the international student to improve their adaptation to Hawai‘i instead of focusing on their language skills since they are able to derive the resources of it from the university.

### 5.3.1 THE EVALUATION AND INFLUENCE OF THE CBI

Hawai‘i, the only state in the US that is located in the tropics, usually associated with its tourist industry and famous natural resources such as beaches or volcano rather than the indigenous culture and local community. Many people neglect the real essence of the cultures in Hawai‘i as well as the local issues, especially for those who are from the other countries or even other states in US. People can’t be blamed for not realizing Hawaiian beliefs and customs. These includes not understanding the true meaning of ‘kokua’ (mutual assistance) and how it matters to the community. How colonization had confused the Native Hawaiians of their self-identity. How mother nature is incorporated in the indigenous beliefs. The practice of ‘kuleana’ (responsibility) to not only Hawaiian culture but also to different cultures. Most would not understand how the immigrants and the US culture help shape the society and how do we deal with our differences. More important is also how do we reduce prejudice when being exposed to such a diverse community when there are no any well-organized educational systems to educate the public properly on it.

First, I would start with the evaluation of CBI from both sides of the staffs and the students. Following is part of the interview with a female staff (A.H , personal interview, Jan 25, 2019) from the Education Program in the East-West Center:

Yeah. I'll add a couple of things. So when I was mentioning CBI. I didn't talk about how much we actually try to include a very place-based Hawai'i experience in CBI. So, a lot of orientations are just about you know...'here's how to be safer' or 'Here's what our campus looks like' or 'here's what you know your rules are for being in our program'. But we try very hard to make it an immersive program into being in Hawai'i and really understanding the culture in ways that are actually even hard to get to as people from outside. Like going to the Kahana Valley and seeing the Loi patches and seeing how the Native Hawaiian culture ...cultural traditions and practices. So, I think it's unique that we dig in a lot into Hawaiian culture and that ...that's part of what we try to put into each CBI. But in addition to that I think things like the ‘‘ohana’... family and the friends of the East-West Center is also a really great mechanism to get people connected to families ...you know.

This correspond shows ‘**posterior understanding**’ and ‘**community engagement**’. According to the A.H., the East-West Center has worked hard to not only convey the importance of local Hawaiian culture but also aims to create opportunities for student participants to be immersed in it. The most noticeable information she addressed was that the East-West Center wants to provide experiences and knowledge which students are not able or cannot easily to derive from other institution if they want to adapt to Hawai'i. Furthermore, she claimed the

concept of ‘family’, which she also referred it as ‘‘ohana’(family) in the interview, is the mechanism that connect everyone in this community and establish their sense of belongings.

When I asked about people’s first image or preliminary impression of the culture in Hawai‘i before they came here to study, most of them provided limited and preconceived information. For example, Respondent O mentioned that he did not have much knowledge of the culture in Hawai‘i due to geographical factors:

I'm kind of embarrassed to admit that I... knew very little of Hawaiian culture. Just... something smells good....(laugh) Just the... food (laugh) ...just the ...imaging...being there ...all you know... (like)palm trees, things like that... beaches. So that was very ...because in Europe we're so far away... from Hawai‘i that no one actually goes to Hawai‘i. Like... if we want to go to ...like a tropical place we can just go to like... like South Portugal or like there's some islands in between Africa and Europe.

This correspond shows ‘**preconceived understanding**’. Like many other people, who intuitively associated Hawai‘i with tropical images and tourism, he also claimed that his prospective toward the culture in Hawai‘i was very basic and stereotypical. However, when I asked him to share his cognition of Hawai‘i after he came here, he gave me a much different response with his experience in CBI. He said that the CBI not only helps the students to learn Hawaiian culture from people who actually possess expertise but also build up students’ connection with the diverse cultures in the East-West Center:

He (Prof. Mark Alapaki Luke ) is the guy with the CBI. And Kuhio, too. So the guys were doing CBI. Basically that's where I learned (the) most of my Hawaiian culture (from)... People like [Anonymous A] (Hawaiian student; EWC student affiliate)... You know [Anonymous A]?

...And I remember because he (Anonymous A) is a very strong person....with.... you know strong opinions about...the rights of...and the culture of Hawai‘i. And so... I wanted to talk to him. To make sure that....you know ...we are on the same page and that... you know... I'm not doing anything that's disrespectful....yeah... The things that I learned specifically are about the taro and....you know ...terms like puka (hole) or kuleana (responsibility). Things like that. So, it's very ...still ...pretty basic but it's definitely slowly kind of accumulated.

This content shows ‘**posterior understanding**’. His response demonstrates his perceptual changes of the Native Hawaiian culture. He is not the only one whose understanding of the local culture in Hawai‘i was reshaped through the CBI. For example, Respondent L mentioned:

CBI...I would say is very meaningful and it's very important for especially the first time comer to the...to the UH or the East West Center because we are kind of... if you don't have too much ideas about how to value...right? CBI introduce us to the culture of Hawai‘i. Because they also had a field trip. So we can still... not just stay in the school but go out off school to see the taro farm, the fish pond and engage with the local people. So that is a very important community building projects for... the East-West Center participants

As an introduction activity, CBI is an important initiative that contributes to individuals’ connection with not only the local community but also the community in the East-West Center for those who newly arrive in Hawai‘i or who are new participants in the EWC student program.

According to my interview with Respondent A, a male Iranian student, he shared his aspects toward the CBI:

Actually it was nice. It was two parts. One part was about UH and facilities, these stuffs... rules and the most of that were for Hawaiian culture. So...specifically we worked on that... and how much (the) East-West Center is important to (the) people... So here (in CBI) you can see that people from different cultures...come together, sit around at the table and talk about an issue. It doesn't matter that eventually they reach to an answer or not ...but...that's good. Your minds become closer and closer.

This correspond exhibits '**positive feedback/opinion**', '**posterior understanding**', '**community engagement**'. The remarkable point that he mentioned in the interview is the importance of the East-West Center to the people, like most of the interviewees did, giving a positive response regarding CBIs especially on 'learning Native Hawaiian culture' and 'building connection/friendship'. Moreover, it appears that he also experienced the different cultures and the discussion about different issues during the program, which allows him to be more accommodated to different voices from other participants in the East-West Center.

Generally, individuals can gain higher familiarity to the culture in Hawai'i by being exposed to native culture through various dimensions such as visiting local community, learning their artifacts and engaging in traditional practices. Hence, Respondent K suggested that learning about a new place helps new-comers get settled in the environment and to adjust to local life:

...the CBI... it helped me learn more about Hawaiian culture... not just culture but....How far Hawai'i has come...agriculture and water management. So... it was very informative on our part about Hawai'i. Yeah...and when you know about something or somebody...that helps you to live with that person or that thing. So when you learn about

Hawai‘i, it helps us to settle in. Yeah. So the CBI approach from learning about Hawai‘i, it helps me to...settle in...And it helps me to know my fellow students because during the CBI you meet new students. You interact ...you know each other ...so that is connections and build connections, new friends. Yeah. So...it's nice.

Besides learning culture and building social network, CBI also provides them a chance to meet with some staff members and resources (e.g. financial aid, visa clearance) in the East-West Center, especially in the Education Program, which mainly in charge of the student affairs and offers them the assistance they need in the future. Consequently, program description in CBI is another crucial factor that helps their adaptation.

### 5.3.2 THE EVALUATION AND INFLUENCE OF THE WES

Second, I examined student participants' inspiration for cultural awareness in Wednesday Evening Seminar (WES). WES is renamed as 'The Exchange' at Spring 2019. Generally, each seminar consists of a speech and a performance. I interviewed the students about their opinions toward WES (or The Exchange), especially about the benefits they had acquired from it. The highlights of this part of the interviews focused on questions related to the culture in Hawai‘i, acculturation to the new environment and their consciousness of their home culture. Respondent L mentioned his experience in the WES:

Yeah. There is a lecturer, who is also Hawaiian native I think... she's an English professor in UH. So that they inspired us to think ...to think that uh... that in a native Hawaiian way, which means that when we are here we're not just thinking about "hey, there is Asian, there is white American" but there is... is a native Hawaiian (way) and we have to think of because they are ...like the owner of the land...originally... but they are



kind of disposed and displaced. And how... how we... how we can have a reconciliation with the Native Hawaiian is also (a) very important issue here. And then just as you mentioned... is also very important that we should mention of several issues. For example, just like I said, land justice, reconciliation or the tourism issue...

From the interview, '**posterior understanding**' can be detected. Respondent L was able to provide detailed information and some examples of the indigenous culture as well as issues that he had picked up from the WES. However, he disagreed with the point that WES helps him to shape his own cultural identity by telling me: "most of the WES classes are not so meaningful. Some classes are very good. Some classes are not so good... not so related...to my research or my interests. Okay. So I don't think that the WES shapes my identity as a Taiwanese" whereas Respondent V had different opinions: "I think it (WES) also educates you about the different issues that exist in the world. It (WES) makes me feel more entrenched towards my... towards my culture in such a way that I find my roots deeply grounded to who I am as Filipino. So how do I distinguish myself from Filipino... compared to the others. I guess that's so it gives me a stronger sense of my identity." Respondent A also mentioned that since WES covered some environmental issues in Hawai'i, he has raised more concerns of the environmental problems in Iran and has realized that he should care more about his own country as well as his culture.

Additionally, some interviewees considered WES 'not so related to their life in Hawai'i' and it has some shortcomings, which shows '**non-positive feedback/opinion**'. For instance, "it has... its pros and cons... It was... most of... sort of... kind of...research based ... I'm sure... yeah... it helped... but I couldn't say how much actually...", "I think it is good actually... to be exposed to something...new...they don't talk about culture so it's not so relevant to life...the real life here in Hawai'i ... so probably (it) didn't help me (to) adjust (to Hawai'i) that much", "Ok,

the seminar does not help me to adjust my life in Hawai‘i ... but it just helps me to learn about many aspects of life.”

On the other hand, theme ‘**academic/scholarly**’ existed when some interviewees regarded the WES as a good opportunity to exchange thoughts and to open their minds to different cultures or even different disciplines of studies. Respondent C shared her experiences of WES with me:

they offered different topics so I learned something new...almost each session. Especially from... they're different from my own (major)... In particular, some science. I think they talked about marine biology or oceanography. This was interesting for me and also...uh...I forgot (laugh) but...but there are just different topics that I don't study...

Other respondents also described their feelings about WES: “...that different people think different things”, “...you see other cultures progressing in terms of their mindsets...get perspectives coming from different lenses somehow you incorporate that and you learn from those...”, and “it helps me to know that we are different. Yeah. But...we are kind of coexist. So, it tells me to appreciate the distinction between cultures.” Therefore, we could see that people’s experiences of WES (or The Exchange) are highly diverse, which may stem from the fact that people’s interests, focuses, and cultures are different. Also, the great variety of topics the seminars covered could be another factor that cause different outcomes from interviewees’ responses.

### 5.3.3 CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTION IN THE COMMUNITY

I revealed the merits of cultural diversity and cross-cultural communication within the student community. Ely and Thomas (2001) assert the importance of integration-and-learning perspective in their research of a multicultural working environment. This perspective refers to the approach that makes diversity a resource for learning and adapting changes that affect people's experiences. Encouraging people to discuss their different viewpoints openly, integration-and-learning perspective functions for cross-cultural learning and thereby enhance the work. As a result, I also wanted to probe into the intercultural communication in the East-West Center and figure out the advantages that students can derive from cross-cultural learning as well as integration in the East-West Center. One of the missions of the student affiliate program is to put emphases on cross-cultural insights and promote the values of different cultures among a diverse student body as A.H. suggested:

...living in this dormitory, in this community with people from 41 different cultures and countries and new disciplines and backgrounds and so it's a whole another layer of learning. Yeah, because you're also seeing the America experience through other people's eyes. And learning about all these other Asia Pacific cultures at the same time.

This correspond shows theme '**cultural diversity**'. For instance, Respondent A told me that he was invited to the celebration of Chinese New Year by Taiwanese friends in the dormitory and that was a great opportunity for him to approach to different culture. Respondent O mentioned how he successfully learned about cooking Indian curry from his friends in dorm and he felt proud of it. Respondent C shared her experiences in living in Hale Manoa and its influence on her attitudes toward cultural differences:

... that's (living in Hale Manoa) probably my number one favorite thing here is to be surrounded by different cultures because we talk about food and culture things and different religions... So I like that. I think I became more open minded. Because I met people from countries like ...Iran and Muslim people...and Bangladesh and... like South Asia... that I didn't have many friends from before... So it definitely opened my horizon and I learned a lot of new things... You don't judge them by what they do or what they say but you accept (them) and just be patient. That kind of listen(ing) to what they have said. So in terms of that I think it's very helpful because... I hope I became less judgmental and stereotypical than before...

During the interviews I conducted, almost every student participant mentioned the advantages they have benefited from cultural diversity in the EWC dormitory. For example, Respondent M told me that the communal kitchen in Hale Kuahine is the place where she makes most of her friends and learn different culture in the dorm: "...from our conversation...in kitchen... I learned a lot of different cultures...so...maybe I could use the information to talk to other friends in their countries. I also learned how to cook their food. So, I taught them to my Japanese friends and share the cultures." From her response, she explained that her experiences in living with people from different places not only help her to explore other cultures but also enable her to pass the information she has acquired from the cross-cultural communication on to her friends who are in the same cultural group. Her behavior of sharing the knowledge with her Japanese peers could change her friends' perception or values toward different cultures, hence, furtherly facilitate other people's acculturation.

In Respondent L's response, '**community engagement**' can be sensed when stated that the dorm mates help him to adapt to the life in a new place more easily: "I think the important

ways (are) that your friends will guide you around, right? To take you to shop, take you to the beach or take you to anywhere. Yeah. And... if they talk to you... they bring their perspectives. They bring their experiences...here in Hawai‘i ...and (they) help me to adjust or accommodate to the Hawaiian life faster and easier.” He suggested that his social network and his friendship within the EWC dormitory could help him to adapt to the life in Hawai‘i more successfully. On the other hand, Respondent V, who lives in Hale Kuahine, gave his personal opinions based on the comparison between Hale Kuahine and Hale Manoa:

Well, I think (living in Hale Kuhine) it's generally positive... I think. In terms of the place... I like it. I'm happy. I think HK (Hale Kuahine) is a place of people who are naturally... I think generally more serious. But I feel like compared to HM (Hale Manoa), which I think they are more into social gatherings compared to us. So I think it just suits my personality more. Um... HK also provided me an opportunity to meet people from all over the world and it gave me an opportunity to interact with them.

Since Hale Manoa can accommodate much more people than Hale Kuahine, residents in Hale Manoa tend to be more involved in planning activities or gatherings such as the movie night, sport games, and musical band. Although residents in Hale Kuahine also host activities like potluck or farewell party occasionally, the gatherings in Hale Kuahine are more exclusive and are in smaller scale in contrast to Hale Manoa. However, some of the Hale Kuahine residents often visit Hale Manoa to join their activities. Generally, the similarity shared by the two dormitory buildings is cultural diversity (**‘cultural diversity’** and **‘community engagement’**). Both Hale Manoa and Hale Kuahine are multicultural communities that could form acculturation on international students through cross-cultural experiences in their daily life.

Besides CBI and WES, events such as Intercultural Potluck, Concert on the Lawn, East-West Fest and EWC dormitory are the channels for student participants to explore Hawai‘i and cultural diversity. Moreover, within those multicultural events, they have great opportunities to demonstrate their own cultures (e.g., displaying food, custom, music of home culture in the events) and enhance cultural learning. In this case, ‘**awareness of home culture**’ can be found. Interviewees commented something like “I actively participated in intercultural potluck last year, which I think is the best event... In general, this event really connects people and bring them together because everybody loves to eat food”, “...last year for Concerts on the Lawn actually I performed....it's a good chance, good opportunity for people to gather and share the diverse culture, which is nice ...” or “...they do it in different ways but I think in general they promote diversity in a very academic way ...in the academic and fun way.”

#### 5.3.4 CONNECTION BETWEEN STUDENTS AND EWC STAFF MEMBERS

As mentioned before, most of the student events are organized by student affiliates but assisted by the staffs. Hence, the students have to work closely with the staff, especially with those in the education program. Furthermore, staffs are viewed as the main contact when students need assistance, resources, information or supports in their daily life, which demonstrates ‘**community engagement**’. For example, Respondent K considered the staffs in the East-West Center really friendly and warmhearted: “They are super wonderful. I kind of emphasize that. I feel like...that they are my brothers and sisters. Oh, because... when I talk to them, they talk to me back with love.”

President Vuylsteke addressed how the staffs support the international students based on their demands in, for example, education, events, and facilities:

We have a big support staff on grounds and facilities as well that's quite responsive to basic needs and any problems that may arise. We have a strong support staff and the education under the dean and her colleagues to help support student initiatives as well as are the East-West Center initiatives that we do. A good example of that is the annual East West Fest, which is kind of organized by students to a large extent. But then again even now since I arrived increasing staff support because as that grows you can't expect everybody to do all those logistic things that we're geared up to do.

According to the two staffs I interviewed from the Education Program in the East-West Center, the organization does not arrange any cross-cultural training programs for the staffs. However, the staffs who work in the East-West Center are certainly required to possess the qualification and the relevant background with their position. For example, in education program, A.H. stated that her job is to oversee the overall experience of students at the East-West Center, covering everything from students' safety to their well-being, intellectual opportunities, professional development opportunities, and social cultural opportunities. She mentioned that she had spent one year in Pakistan as a Peace Corps volunteer and later became a teacher trainer in Bulgaria with other Peace Corps volunteers, which she considered a very valuable experience for her current job in the East-West Center as she found the passion of being an international educator. Thus, she could help people to acculturate and gain positive experience in a different culture:

...I feel like I came to this role (her position in EWC) as a trainer of multicultural groups. I spent 15 years... you know working with short term professional development programs, bringing groups from all countries of Asia Pacific with Americans and then taking them on study to travel. So... so really facilitating this kind of experience. But I

also think it's valuable to have had my own experiences of having to live in a different culture. As a Peace Corps volunteer, I saw something else because that it helps me to connect to that concept of being in a foreign place. That's very important and I think...yeah... I think it's helpful if staff have that and I think a lot of our staff come with that background. Like having lived overseas or done something...you know... outside of their culture. So I think it's what attracts them to these positions actually.

Respondent M addressed the communication between students and staff members when there were problems:

...do you know the...[laugh]...in our WES, there was a problematic speech? Mmm...a white old man...his speech was like...discrimination of Native Americans... It was great that everyone talked to the East-West Center...the staffs...like...emailing to the WES people and finally...Ann (The staff in East-West Center)...apologized in front of everyone. It was great.

Inevitably, there may be some conflicts or mistakes that accidentally take place in such culturally diverse community like the East-West Center. In Hawai'i, there are some sensitive issues that have caused vast impact to the indigenous groups as well as the local society. Thus, the staffs in the East-West Center have to be more discreet and skillful when taking care of such situations. From her statement, it shows that the individuals are willing to report their concerns to the personnel and the EWC officials also regard students' requests carefully.

Another staff, S.V., described that he is the alumni of the East-West Center and he used to be engaged in organizing events such as CBI when he was a student affiliate at the time:

Well, I used to be a graduate degree fellow, and I used to be a student affiliate and originally I... I just started a helping-out here at the East-West Center because they



needed... uh... people for the Community Building Institutes. So...uh....

and eventually this job (was) open(ed) up. So, I applied ... so I knew it as a student, but then I also knew some of the intricacies of organizing the Community Building Institute.

There is a great number of EWC alumni that choose to continue their career and work at the East-West Center after graduated. In that way, those staffs, who are the previous student affiliates, have sufficient knowledge and understanding from their past experiences with the events or programs in the East-West Center. Moreover, it could be easier for those staffs to put themselves in the student participants' shoes based on their know-how as former student affiliates because they went through the similar activities or process.

#### 5.3.5 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' INTEGRATION

As addressed previously, integration seems to be the ideal condition in acculturation process since it includes acknowledgement to both home culture and host culture. International students who pursue degrees abroad are more likely to spend longer time in a foreign country, which may cause problems from the accommodation of new culture, new environment and new people. However, in contrast to undergraduate students, graduate students have less opportunities or less time to engage in activities such as fraternity, sorority, university sport teams due to the heavy workload in their research and positions like TA (teaching assistance) or RA (research assistance). In this case, the East-West Center aims to benefit the graduate students in the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa not only on financial supports but also with activities that allow

them to be surrounded to different cultures, enabling the students to be greatly exposed to cross-cultural communication and be connected to local culture.

The East-West Center provides great resources for international students to explore Hawaiian culture and meanwhile facilitates their interaction with different cultures. Moreover, according to my research and personal experience, many of the international students who affiliated with the East-West Center are able to gain higher awareness with multifaceted views of their identity and their home culture, like paying more attention on domestic issues in their countries, passionately sharing their cultures with other people, displaying their cultural tradition confidently. The East-West Center also tries to inspire the students with multiple aspects in Hawaiian culture or Asian Pacific cultures through arts, history, politics, literature, business by including them in academic events such as WES and IGSC. Their integration to local culture in Hawai'i as well as to different cultures in the East-West Center helps them to build connection to this place.

Numerous factors determine international students' well-being and adaption to challenges in a new society. Proper cross-cultural interaction is definitely an important contributor to the reduction of sojourners' anxiety and stress. In my research, I focused on cross-cultural behaviors such as culture-learning, network-building, and acculturation from various aspects including arts, food, dormitory, community, events, academic interests, and self-identity. Here are the examples of integration from Respondent M :

When I talk to other Japanese friend, I try to be more...respectful or polite because...it's...most of the Japanese friends of mine...are older than me...and it's part of Japanese culture that we respect older people so I should be more...[laugh]. But when I talk to other friends here (Hale Kuahine) I almost forget (that) I am Japanese.

From the context, we can see how integration takes place in Respondent M's case when she tried to practice her own culture during the interaction with Japanese group since she did not want to be rude and offensive to her seniors. However, once she was with her dorm mates, who may from different cultures, she altered her behaviors as well as mindset. As Berry's (1997) acculturation framework suggests, she was able to maintain her own culture identity but also adapt to new culture or new environment by shifting her cultural awareness. Another interviewee, Respondent O, who is from Europe, also talked about the differences between his home culture and the host culture in US:

...so people (in O's home culture) kind of like to... sort of ...you don't want to stand out too much. Yeah. And I remember when my grades were really good... But I remember I... I wouldn't tell people because they would be...kind of jealous... Whereas here (Hawai'i) ...so here I learned how to....be proactive about my achievements whereas back home I would hide those achievements because people would look at you and say like "oh! don't be such a show-off." So that's another very important cultural aspect that's similar to Japan.

We can see that although he realized that his home culture restricts him from keeping high profile and being too egotistic, he can still acknowledge the cultural differences in US. Therefore, he would change the way he presents himself in the two different cultures. Furthermore, he also uncovered the similarity between his home culture and Japanese culture. As a result, we can see that besides he successfully integrated to the host culture without abandoning his own culture, Respondent O could also notice the contrasts within different cultures. Both Respondent M and Respondent O are examples of integration in the acculturation process.

It would be hard for individuals to integrate to a new culture without having any knowledge of it or refusing to engage in it. There are many components that build people's communication to a new culture including the acquisition of intercultural experiences, education, social network and peer's supportiveness. Accordingly, cultural competence could be a vital concept for the individuals who look for establishing positive connections with the host culture in their acculturation. Deardorff (2004) defined culture competence as 'the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes' (p. 194). In my research, I found out that the East-West Center can efficiently improve international students' culture competence in their acculturation to different cultures as well as the local culture in Hawai'i through the resources.

#### **5.4 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION RESULTS**

Participant observation is a method for a researcher from anthropology and social science to take part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people, which serves as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2010). In this research, I choose four locations for the participant observation: A meeting of one of the EWC events, The Exchange (new name of WES), 12th Floor Diamond Head kitchen in Hale Manoa and kitchens in Hale Kuahine.

Being a student affiliate in the East-West Center myself, some of the subjects in my observation are my friends or acquaintances. My identity as an insider might affect the results due to the relationship with other students, my partnership with the staff members and my own

feelings about the events. Those roles of me could lead to a different conclusion from doing this research as an outsider, who barely know anything about the East-West Center. I would find myself more involved in the intercultural communication with subjects in the observation since I have spent two years participating the activities in the East-West Center and have gained certain degree of familiarity with the people, policies or environment of this institution. With all those possible reasons above, my analysis could be prejudiced and subjective sometimes.

#### 5.4.1 OBSERVATION 1: THE MEETING

The group of this meeting consisted of 9 affiliate students (including myself, as one of the member) and 5 staffs from the EWC. The student cohort contains students from US, South Asia, South-East Asia, North-East Asia and the Pacific island. The meeting took place at Pago Pago room in Imin International Conference Center at 3 p.m. There was a U-shape meeting table in Pago Pago room. Most of the students sit on the right side of the table and only two of the students sit on another side with the staffs.

As evidenced in my field notes, there was a small talk between the students at the very beginning of the meeting while waiting for the other two staffs and it did not seem to have any contact between the staffs and the students until the meeting officially started when the other two staffs arrived. A male staff started by greeting the groups and asked students about holidays, winter break and encouraged them to make progress on works. He was trying to be humorous so the atmosphere became more pleasant. Second, another male staff asked everyone to introduce themselves. They demonstrated their politeness and respectfulness by signifying eye contacts when people were taking turns and talking about themselves. They demonstrated their politeness

and respectfulness by maintaining eye contacts when people were taking turns and talked about themselves. While an intern was sharing his ideas of the arrangement to the venue and set-up of the event, a male staff, who is managing the building, articulated the importance of communication. “Try not to make a decision without informing me and confirming with me... because...you know...there are a lot of events here. This is not the only one. So just let me know earlier. I will do everything I can to help you with the equipment or the set-ups. Coordination and communication are important. Don’t forget about that...” The intern nodded and assured the staff that they will give early notification for every event in the future. Other staffs also showed their anticipation in good communication with the student interns.

Later, another student intern asked a female staff for helps when he was reporting the difficulties in reaching out to the guest speakers. The female staff said: “Ok, let me think if there is any other way to contact her... and I will send her an email again. She did not reply me last time either... but don’t worry. We can work together. We will work this out.” Generally, the staffs were able to demonstrate their supportiveness and their intention to maintain positive communication with the students. The students were also opened to discussion and negotiation.

#### 5.4.2 OBSERVATION 2: THE EXCHANGE

The East-West Center made some changes to the Wednesday Evening Seminar at Spring 2019. It is renamed ‘The Exchange’ and it takes place every Monday. Similar to WES, it focuses on different topics and covering various issues. In each session of The Exchange, two guest speakers will be invited to give a speech regarding the topics based on their experiences or research. The most different element of The Exchange from the former WES is the additional performance section. The main theme of The Exchange of Spring 2019 is ‘Borders and Mobility.

Exploring the Meaning of Us and Them.’ The topic of The Exchange I did my observation in is ‘a conversation on “border as enclosures and the many struggles against them”.’ There were two speakers, one was Dr. Marcus Rediker, who is the Dan and Maggie Inouye Distinguished Chair in Democratic Ideals at UH and Distinguished Professor of Atlantic History at the University of Pittsburgh. Another speaker was Dr. Nandita Sharma, who is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at UH, specializing in racism, migration and transnationalism. The venue of that session was at Keoni Auditorium in Jefferson Hall (East-West Center Imin Conference Center). 100 Students participants were divided into 10 groups. Each group was assigned with one facilitator, who is a voluntary student affiliate. The facilitators would help the group members to sign up for attendance, assisting the group discussion and coordinating with other staffs if necessary. Moreover, The Exchange is also open to the public so there were 30 more guest audiences participating in the first week’s event.

At the beginning of the event, there were four student affiliates who serve as the interns that mainly organized The Exchange for Spring 2019 briefly introducing their team and then played a video made by themselves. The video addressed the basic instruction of The Exchange such as ‘please be on time’, ‘do not waste the food’, ‘turn your electronic devices on silent’, etc. It was obvious that they put great effort to demonstrate the instructional video with more humor in an attempt to be more approachable to the participants. After that, the host (the student who leads the intern team) welcomed two speakers and gave them leis. In the first section of The Exchange, Dr. Rediker and Dr. Sharma covered the issues associated with historical borders and England’s colonization, capitalism and imperialism, immigration and racism. The talks were based on the two speakers’ professions but it did not relate to Pacific culture or Native Hawaiian culture that much. Although the talks were carried out in a more academic way, like a lecture, it

could still benefit the international students since they were discussing migration issues. At the Q&A time, due to time limitation, only two students were raising their questions to the speakers, one asked question about the legitimacy problems of immigration and another asked about racism issues.

Before the start of the second section of the event, there was a discussion session that allows the students to share their opinions about the speech. Following was break time for the students to enjoy food prepared by food coordinators. The food for each week is different, regarding to the concept 'Borders and mobility. Exploring the meaning of us and them', for example, the second week will be Korean food, the third week will be Hawaiian finger food and last week will be Filipino cuisine. The food for the first week was Chaat and Sooji Halwa. During break time, people lined up for food, chatting and greeting with each other. I observed that interaction between students or even between students and staffs happened naturally by talking about food, catching up with friends, sharing their opinions. Thus, interpersonal communication occurred with high frequency during the break time. The second section of The Exchange is the performance. At the first week of The Exchange, they invited Dr. Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio to showcase chanting of Native Hawaiian poetry at the lānai (roofed patio) outside the Imin Center. She firstly explained some of the meaning of the contexts in her poetry, which was helpful for those who do not have relevant background or understanding. Some students complained that it is not a good idea to arrange the performance outdoor because it was cold and windy. One of the students said that Dr. Osorio's performance has high quality and he really enjoyed it. The whole event ended after the performance. Besides the problem with the venue, the performance was a good chance for individuals to appreciate the Native Hawaiian culture. After the event, some of the student volunteers and interns stayed and did clean-up.



Also, the volunteers and interns showed positive collaboration with the staffs (who are from the Education Program and the technicians of Imin Conference Center ) when doing set-up and clean-up. The staffs were really supportive and they were able to offer immediate assistance like arranging the equipment, maintaining the site, or troubleshooting.

#### 5.4.3 OBSERVATION 3: THE KITCHEN AT HALE MANOA

I chose a Tuesday and went to the 12 floor Ewa kitchen to have dinner. There were 6 tables with few seats in the kitchens. The setting in the kitchen at 7:30 p.m. was like this: two Russian residents were having dinner together at one set of tables; a Taiwanese girl, a South Korean girl and a Chinese girl were cooking and chatting; a Taiwanese man was sitting at another set of tables and was eating. After the Taiwanese girl and the Korean girl were done cooking, we went to sit with the Taiwanese man and started the conversation of school work, field research, and the problems one of the girls had encountered in her relationship. They were sharing their opinions, giving suggestions, and encouraging the girl when she addressed the displeasure with her boyfriend. Meanwhile, a Russian student passed by and greeted everyone. After a while, an Iranian man joined the conversation, talking about the Intercultural Potluck and the Iranian dishes he made that day. A half an hour later, another Iranian guy participated in us with his food, discussing about piety and marriage in different cultures. People like Korean and Taiwanese stated that family is an important norm in East Asian culture hence parents usually have high expectation for their children's marriage, young adults are more dependent on their parents in contrast with Western culture and how do national policies shape the value of family in South Korea. People used their own experiences and cases of their family members to

illustrate the cultural differences in marital issues. They sometimes made jokes during the conversation. Afterward, a student from Thailand showed up in the kitchen and cooked. He greeted other people and began to chat with them. Meanwhile, there was a European student who stopped by, microwaving his food and said 'hello' to everyone. Later, a student from Indonesia entered the kitchen to grab some utensils from her cabinet and came over for a short talk with a Taiwanese student.

During the observation, I saw people sitting together, sharing food and bringing up different topics such as relationship, studies, family, cultures, gender, gossip and jokes. The most remarkable thing is that they individuals were sharing the values from their home cultures and exchange their ideas. English was the main language spoken by everyone in the kitchen even if there were three people who could speak Mandarin. I went to the Diamond Head kitchen on the other side of the hallway at the 12th floor and found out that there were fewer people cooking there. According to a resident who lives there, sometimes people have a different schedule so some of them may eat earlier while others have meals later. Additionally, it also depends on culture. For example, Iranian people tend to have dinner late in the evening and Japanese people like to cook for dinner earlier. Generally, a Taiwanese student indicated that the period from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. is the peak hour in the kitchen.

#### 5.4.4 OBSERVATION 4: THE KITCHENS AT HALE KUAHINE

I conducted another participant observation at the kitchens in Hale Kuhaine on a Sunday around 6 o'clock in evening. In Hale Kuahine, there are two kitchens on the ground floor. Adjacent to the kitchens is a long rectangle table with some chairs and an open lounge with sofas and few coffee tables. In the main kitchen, I saw two Chinese people cooking their dinner,

chatting with only each other in Mandarin. Besides them, there was a Caucasian woman preparing her meal by herself. After a while, a Vietnamese guy came in, greeting me and talking about his school work with me. By that time, a Taiwanese guy and a Nepalese guy entered the kitchen chatting with each other about their weekend plan. The Taiwanese guy said ‘hello’ to the Caucasian girl and the Vietnamese guy as well, talking about things like ‘what are you cooking for dinner today’, ‘where did you get this fish’, ‘I went hiking this weekend. It was amazing...’ and ‘when do you usually go exercise?’

Then I went to the backyard kitchen, which is smaller than the main one, after half an hour. There were few residents from Vietnam, Thailand, Philippine, Taiwan and Japan cooking there. They were talking about their positions as TA in their departments, complaining about the salary and difficulties they have encountered with the students in their classes. People mentioned the heavy workload from their studies and also their jobs, which greatly exhausts them. The Taiwanese girl did not stay long in the kitchen after the conversation. Other people continued the talk of school life. People were sharing their feelings and offering their encouragement to each other. From their interaction, I saw people seeking for listeners in the kitchen when they feel depressed from their school life. It is important for the dormitory to provide the opportunity to reinforce their social network with peers so it is more easily for them to derive supports or assistance from friends in this community.

Based on my observation, I found out that people in Hale Kuahine, especially Chinese people, rarely interact with different races as much as people in Hale Manoa 12th floor kitchen do. On the contrary, residents in Hale Kuahine tend to engage in short talks with other dorm mates in the kitchen. People in Hale Kuahine seldom sit together and share their food during weekdays. On the other hand, they will host potluck or birthday party sometimes on weekends. I

discovered that when it comes to cross-cultural communication, Chinese people, which account for a great number of the residents there in Hale Kuahine, are more separated from other groups of people. However, most of the Chinese people in Hale Kuahine are not in the student affiliates program. That could be one of the reasons that contributes to their lower level of involvement in cross-cultural communication because they barely participate in the activities in the EWC community and have less chances to build their connection with others.

## **CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study is to investigate international students' acculturation in a government-established, Asia-Pacific-focused institution that adjoins the campus of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Berry (2005) claims that acculturation includes a process of cultural and psychological changes which involve various forms of mutual accommodation, leading to some longer-term psychological and sociocultural adaptations between both groups. There are numbers of reasons such as colonization, military invasion, migration, and sojourning (e.g. tourism, international study, and overseas posting) that result in the occurrence of contact and change.

The findings in this research suggest that the international students are able to explore the local Hawaiian culture from both subjective and objective aspects, such as agriculture (e.g., taro patching), artifacts (e.g., leis making), history, religion, tourism, and environmental issues, through the programs arranged by the East-West Center. The more international students learn about the local culture, the more they can conceptualize and value it. Thus, the possibility of confronting culture shock dwindled, allowing them to accept the host culture with less obstacles. Most of the participants mentioned that they have learned about the local culture from CBI and also from the trips (e.g., hiking) with EWC dorm friends. Nevertheless, as a channel that guides students to approach local culture, the East-West Center should place more focus on other programs (e.g., Mentoring Program and Host Family Program) that offer more opportunities to the students for their involvement in local community outside the East-West Center.

Another significant finding is international students' appreciation of culture diversity in the East-West Center. During their interaction, they may have to face some challenges. As a result, when it comes to difficulties between the communication of two or more different cultures, it requires them to negotiate with people, elucidate their opinions, respect others and perhaps to modify their behaviors.

In addition to cross-cultural accommodation, there are abundant approaches that connect the international students with different cultures in the East-West Center. For example, Intercultural Potluck, Concert on the Lawn, East-West Fest, APLP (Asia Pacific Leadership Program), Noon Seminar, WES/The Exchange, IGSC, etc. The East-West Center aims to cultivate student participants' appreciation not only to other cultures but also to their home cultures. For the individuals who seek to acknowledge their cultural identities in a dynamic community, the East-West Center conveniently provides a platform for the international students to present and promote their own cultures

Wu (2015) points out that there are two main issues the international students may experience concerning acculturation: the level to which individuals maintain their cultural identity and personal characteristics after becoming involved in a new culture and the level at which an individual maintains relationships with the host society. Berry (2011) believes that when engaging in daily interaction if individuals can preserve in some degree their own cultural integrity and also intend to participate in the large society because there are benefits for people to maintain own cultures, integration would be their common option. Exhibiting their own cultural via various aspects (e.g., food, music, customs, ideology) and learning about their home cultures through different lenses from people with different backgrounds could increase their desire to keep their identity. Some of the events (e.g., WES, CBI) also motivate them to gain higher

awareness of domestic issues in their hometown. Therefore, it helps them to uphold and appreciate their own values in the acculturation.

Additionally, wellbeing and interpersonal connection are also essential criterions that affect international students' acculturation to a new environment. As they build up their friendship and networks in the community, it is easier for them to seek support when they are in need. According to the respondents, the East-West Center has helped them to develop their social network with their peers and the staffs. According to the interview and observation, the staff members are highly communicative and often work with the students closely. Although the East-West Center does not have intercultural training programs for the staffs yet, they do require relevant backgrounds, skills and experiences of the staffs, ensuring that they are eligible to assist the students properly and professionally.

In general, the goal of the East-West Center is to enhance the students' cultural competence by situating them in a plural society with the contacts to both the local culture and foreign cultures. Inevitably, the immersion in different cultures could cause stress or anxiety. However, with the assistance from the staffs and the support from their peers in the East-West Center, it would be easier for the international students to adapt to the new environment than dealing with it by themselves. Gibson (2001) considers acculturation as "the process of cultural change and adaptation that occurs when individuals from different cultures come into contact with each other" (p. 19). The interviewees reported that they have advanced their understandings of Native Hawaiian culture and have fixed their stereotype of Hawai'i, which knowledge navigates them to the closeness with this land. In addition, since the East-West Center amplifies the students' experiences in cross-cultural communication, they are able to correct their attitudes and biased judgment when interacting with people from a different place.

Acculturation has been widely applied when it comes to individuals' adjustment to different cultures. Cross-cultural interaction has become more prevalent under globalization. Hence, it is necessary to understand the theoretical ideas of acculturation and dedicate the mechanism in general education. There are a lot of literatures using acculturation as the framework to scrutinize the issues related to immigration or groups of minorities in the society. However, I think it is worth to study more about the acculturation of the immigrants or the sojourners to Hawai'i, a place that is known for its unique location in the Pacific Ocean, multicultural society and complex historical background. On contrary to the other states in US, the components that comprise the local culture in Hawai'i are quite different from the mainland US, which include indigenous culture, military culture, Asia Pacific culture, etc. Consequently, it would be really valuable to research people's behaviors when adjusting to the culture at this special islands through Berry's acculturation strategies.



## **CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION**

Taking place when two or more cultures come together, acculturation is the psychological term that refers to the alteration of mindset, attitudes, acts or identity. During the acculturation process, for the individuals from the non-dominant groups, sufficient exposure to the host culture is an important cause to advance their career or daily life in host culture. In some cases, those people may need extra assistance to fit in the environment. Besides, it is crucial that they are able to preserve and inherit their own culture at the same time. It is stressful to seek for the balance between different cultures. Thus, more and more institutions and experts are willing to offer professional services or skills on individuals' adjustment to a new society.

According to the report from the University of Pennsylvania's Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, the East-West Center was ranked the fourth Best Government Affiliated Think Tank in 2018 (McGann, 2019). The East-West Center has earned the reputation based on its renowned intellectual programs, research, leadership and insights in both international policy as well as cultural issues. This study suggested that the East-West Center can help international students to acculturate to Hawai'i and enrich their cultural competence with its multiple resources, opportunities and expertise.

Students' experience in the acculturation to their life in Hawai'i is determined by two main dimensions. The first one is local culture, which is about the larger environment of Hawai'i. The second one is the EWC community, which is about the smaller scale of the society. The first dimension includes two parts: the acquisition of the local culture in Hawai'i and the way it shapes people's perception whereas the second dimension is constructed by social

connection, sense of belonging, and multicultural interaction within the East-West Center. Both dimensions structure the cross-cultural communication and reinforce the mechanism of students' integration.

The first dimension is a primary resource for the integration to the local culture. It was discovered that the CBI has played a crucial role in enlightening students with the values, practices, and appreciation of the local culture in Hawai'i. However, WES does not seem too relate to students' acculturation to Hawai'i. Although some of the lectures in WES can help them to learn about Hawaiian culture, the other topics in WES (or The Exchange) are not always associated with Hawai'i. Since WES is a highly interdisciplinary event, some respondents considered it academic and formal. However, according to the interview, student respondents barely talked about activities like the Host Family Program, community service learning, mentoring or the Mentoring Program. Those programs are able to facilitate students' connection to the local community and local resources. As a result, the East-West Center can improve the promotion of such programs and pay more efforts on building students' contacts with the local society.

The second dimension can strongly enhance students' integration, which is widely associated with EWC dormitory, staffs, and events such as CBI, East-West Fest, Intercultural Potluck, etc. Those occasions facilitate the students to establish connection and friendships interculturally, which encouraging them to be more aware of other people's cultures and adapt to the differences via various aspects such as food, languages, customs, and history. Living in a culturally diverse environment also helps them to eliminate prejudice and shape their behaviors. Furthermore, the attitude of the staffs in the East-West Center is another key factor that increases international students' sense of belonging to this community. According to the observation and

interviewees' responses, the staffs in the East-West Center successfully maintain positive communication with the students as they are willing to demonstrate their supportiveness to them.

“So, you know ...if anyone says (that) I have no cross-cultural difficulties that means you're not meeting anybody” (R.Vuylsteke, personal communication, Feb 15, 2019). Indeed, it is challenging to interact with different cultures. It is self-evident that the East-West Center has served as an important agent for international students to learn about cultures. Understanding other cultures encourages people to show respect and appreciation, hence, negative mindsets such as stereotype, discrimination, or political incorrectness are less likely to occur. In addition to learning about other cultures, the East-West Center also helps the international students to raise their cultural awareness of home cultures.

Through the interaction with different cultures and maintaining their consciousness of own cultures, the international students learn how to vary their behaviors not only to diminish the barriers in cross-cultural communication but also to showcase their own identities in a plural environment. Consequently, the international students who are affiliated with the East-West Center can better adjust themselves to life in Hawai‘i due to the resources that enable them to learn about the local culture and facilitate their communication with different people in the dynamic community at the East-West Center.

### **Limitation and future research**

My research is about programs and activities that affect to the acculturation of international students in the East-West Center. However, I should take more variables into consideration, for example, ages, gender, marital condition and their field of study. Furthermore, different

nationality may lead to different degree of adaptation to the local culture in Hawai‘i. For instance, students from Japan may have higher familiarity since there are many Japanese immigrants in Hawai‘i while Taiwanese students could be more interested in the indigenous culture in Hawai‘i due to the influence and shared similarity of Austronesian languages.

Besides international students’ personal background, it would be better if my research could clarify a couple more things in advance. The first one is the different sessions of CBI. My respondents were not selected within the same term of enrollment in the student affiliate program, which means some of them participated in the CBI at 2018 Fall, some of them participated in the CBI semesters earlier, some of them participated the one at Spring 2018. Although conveying similar information, the programs and duration are different in each CBIs because the ones in Fall semester usually take more time (about a week) than those in the Spring semester (about 2-3 days). The lack of consistency may impact how students experience CBIs.

There are two points that could be elaborated more in future research. First, in this research, the focal point is on the resources in the East-West Center that neglected the resources provided by the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, which also host various activities for the international students and offer services about visa, financial aids and counseling. For example, the ISS (International Student Service) and ISA (International Student Association) will arrange workshops, welcome party and English language training. Second, although scholars assume that integration is the most ideal and common strategies in the immigrants’ acculturation to a new society, it would be interesting and important to research in extreme cases such as individuals that present assimilation or marginalization under that circumstance. Examining the extreme cases, or negative cases, could offer the educational institutions with more constructive information and help them to improve the services or policy.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A - Consent form

#### **Consent Form of research in Acculturation of International student in Hawai'i: Case of The East-West Center**

Aloha! My name is Tun Jung Kuo and you are invited to take part in a research study. I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the Department of Communication. As part of the requirements for earning my graduate degree, I am doing a research project.

#### **What am I being asked to do?**

If you participate in this project, I will meet with you for an interview at a location and time convenient for you.

#### **Taking part in this study is your choice.**

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. If you stop being in the study, there will be no penalty or loss to you.

#### **Why is this study being done?**

The purpose of this study is to learn how students acculturate to local culture and integrate to the East-West Center community. You must be the East-West Center Student Affiliate Program participants to take part in this study.

#### **What will happen if I decide to take part in this study?**

If you agree to be in this study, we will conduct an interview with you. The interview will include questions about your experience in attending the events and communication in Hale Manoa or Hale Kuahine. The interview will take about 45 minutes to complete. With your permission, we would also like to audio-record the interview.

Only you and I will be present during the interview. With your permission, I will audio-record the interview so that I can later transcribe the interview and analyze the responses. You will be one of about 15 people I will interview for this study.

#### **What are the risks and benefits of taking part in this study?**

I believe there is little risk to you for participating in this research project. You may become stressed or uncomfortable answering any of the interview questions or discussing topics with me during the interview. If you do become stressed or uncomfortable, you can skip the question or take a break. You can also stop the interview or you can withdraw from the project altogether.

There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this interview. The results of this project may help improve the East-West Center to benefit future students.

#### **Privacy and Confidentiality:**

I will keep all study data secure in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office/encrypted on a password protected computer. Only my University of Hawai'i advisor and I will have access to the information. Other agencies that have legal permission have the right to review research records. The University of Hawai'i Human Studies Program has the right to review research records for this study.

After I write a copy of the interviews, I will erase or destroy the audio-recordings. When I report the results of my research project, I will not use your name. I will not use any other personal identifying information that can identify you. I will use pseudonyms (fake names) and report my findings in a way that protects your privacy and confidentiality to the extent allowed by law.

**Future Research Studies:**

Even after removing identifiers, the data from this study for this study will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

**Questions:**

If you have any questions about this study, please call or email me at 808.308.6746 and [tunjung@hawaii.edu](mailto:tunjung@hawaii.edu). You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Hanae Kramer at [hanae@hawaii.edu](mailto:hanae@hawaii.edu). You may contact the UH Human Studies Program at 808.956.5007 or [uhirb@hawaii.edu](mailto:uhirb@hawaii.edu) to discuss problems, concerns and questions; obtain information; or offer input with an informed individual who is unaffiliated with the specific research protocol. Please visit <http://go.hawaii.edu/jRd> for more information on your rights as a research participant.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign and date this signature page and return it to Tun Jung Kuo

Keep a copy of the informed consent for your records and reference.

**Signature(s) for Consent:**

I give permission to join the research project entitled, "**Acculturation of International student in Hawai'i: Case of The East-West Center.**"

Please initial next to either "Yes" or "No" to the following:

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	I consent to be audio-recorded for the interview portion of this research.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	I consent to being video-recorded for the interview portion of this research.

**Name of Participant (Print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of the Person Obtaining Consent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B- Interview questions (Students)

1. Where do you come from? How many years you've been here in US?
2. Home Culture/Local culture in Hawai'i
  - What comes to your mind when you hear the term "(insert culture of person's country of origin)" e.g., "Taiwanese culture"?
  - What to you are important aspects of (insert culture of person's country of origin)?
  - What are some things that come to your mind when you hear the term "Culture of Hawai'i"?
  - Since coming to Hawai'i to study, what are some aspects of Hawai'i's culture that you have picked up?
3. Events
  - EWC works together with its student affiliates to organize annual or bi-annual events such as the Concert on the Lawn, EW Fest, or the international potluck. Can you give me an example of one such EWC event that you've attended? What are your opinions about (the name of this event)?
  - How has (the name of event) helped you to adjust to life in Hawai'i?
4. WES
  - What are some things that you have learnt from the WES?
  - How have the WES helped you to adjust to life in Hawai'i? OR Have the WES helped you to adjust to life in Hawai'i? Why or why not?
  - Possible Probe questions:
    - How have the WES shaped your identity as a (insert name of country of origin)?
    - How has the WES shaped your realization that certain aspects of Hawai'i's culture do not resonate with you?
5. CBI
  - Tell me more about your personal experiences with the CBIs.
  - Have the CBIs helped you to adjust to life in Hawai'i?
  - Possible Probe questions:
    - How have the CBI shaped your identity as a (insert name of country of origin)?
    - How has the CBI shaped your realization that certain aspects of Hawai'i's culture do not resonate with you?
6. Dorm Life
  - What has your experience living in HM/HK been like?
  - Have the communal kitchens in HM/HK helped you to get to know your dorm mates better/make friends? Why or why not?



-How do you feel about living in a diverse environment? How has this experience affect your interaction with people from different cultures outside EWC (Ex. UH campus, church)

-What are some ways in which the people in your dorm have helped you to adapt to life in Hawai'i?

-Possible probe questions:

-How have the interactions with your dorm mates shaped your identity as a (insert name of country of origin)?

-How have your interactions with your dorm mates helped you to embrace Hawai'i's culture?

-What are some interesting life lessons that you've learnt from your dorm mates?

## 7. Other resources

"In addition, there are also other activities, programs, and initiatives that the EWC staff have organized without/with less of student's helps." Can you think of an example of such an activity/initiative organized exclusively by the EWC staff? How do you feel about it?

-Possible probe questions

-How have the efforts of the EWC staff helped you to know more about Hawai'i's culture?

## APPENDIX C- Interview questions (Staffs)

- Please describe your job. How do you assist the students in EWC?
- Could you tell me about your background or past experiences that relate you to your current work?
- Role of staff→What role do the EWC staff play in helping international students adapt to life in Hawai'i?
- Staff training programs→ What kinds of training programs do the EWC staff receive in order to help international students adapt to life in Hawai'i?
- Programs→What types of programs do the EWC staff organize to help international students adapt to life in Hawai'i?
- Other types of resources→What are some other types of resources that the EWC offers to help international students adapt to life in Hawai'i?
- Have you ever had difficulties dealing with students due to different cultures? (ex. 'dealing with Pacific islanders or Native Hawaiians when discussing sensitive issues such as colonization, tradition, deoccupation with them' or 'dealing with students from different countries who have difficulties adapting to the community') If yes, how did you solve it?

# APPENDIX D- Supplemental tables

Table 1. Codes and information of student respondents

<b>Respondent code</b>	<b>Nationality/Region</b>	<b>Degree Program</b>	<b>Year(s) in US</b>	<b>Residency</b>
<b>A</b>	Iran	Ph.D	2	Hale Manoa
<b>C</b>	Europe	Ph.D	7	Hale Manoa
<b>K</b>	Africa	Ph.D	Less than a year	Hale Manoa
<b>L</b>	Taiwan	Ph.D	Less than a year	Hale Kuahine
<b>M</b>	Japan	Ph.D	Almost 1.5 year	Hale Kuahine
<b>O</b>	Europe	Ph.D	8	Hale Manoa
<b>V</b>	Philippine	Ph.D	4	Hale Kuahine

*\*Notes: There are only a few people from European and African countries. In order to remain the confidentiality, I used regions instead of nationalities to represent their identity.*

Table 2. Codes and information of staff respondents

<b>Respondent (codes)</b>	<b>Department/position in the East-West Center</b>
<b>Richard Vuylsteke</b>	The President of the East-West Center
<b>(No codes; autonym)</b>	
<b>A.H</b>	Education Program
<b>S.V</b>	Education Program

*\*Note: Dr. Richard Vuylsteke agreed to reveal his identity in this research*

Table 3. Manager 1

Manager 1	Learning local culture in Hawai‘i
Definition	Experience and learning the local culture in Hawai‘i, including indigenous culture and other cultures related to different demographic groups such as military, tourists, and Asia-Pacific.
Indicator(s)	‘Ohana, Native Hawaiian, indigenous, history, American, explore, environment
Example Quotes	<p>“Yes I think so because in Hawai‘i... even outside the Hale Manoa or East-West Center... there is big diversity... even if I don't have a friend who's from Solomon Islands or Micronesia. Now if I meet them somewhere else I will approach more openly and... know not to judge them before I actually get to know the person...because when you have more and more contact with people from different countries and religions. You just accept them as human beings and not like where they come from.” (Respondent C, personal communication, Jan 15, 2019).</p> <p>“So I never knew that Hawai‘i...so when it came here I knew about Hawai‘i and its history and... it made me realize how diverse the culture is. I was surprised to find a huge number of Asians that it predominates” (Respondent V, personal communication, Jan Jan 18, 2019)</p>

Table 4. Manager 2

<b>Manager 2</b>	<b>Learn about home culture</b>
<b>Definition</b>	Self-identification, culture appreciation, nationalism
<b>Indicator(s)</b>	In (nation)'s culture, tradition, aspects, landscape, food, cultural concept
<b>Example Quotes</b>	<p>"I'd say once you interact with other people your identity is getting stronger. When you talk to our people you need to that know who you are first. So, of course when I interact with a lot of people. I know that I'm Taiwanese and I know that as you were talking in a Taiwanese way. To make sure people know I am Taiwanese" (Respondent L, personal communication, Jan 19, 2019)</p> <p>"We have some problems... some kind of environmental concerns back home. So yeah. In recent years we had droughts... the sad thing is that people don't care much about that. I cared before but when I came here and saw that "wow! with this environment (Hawai'i) they have lots of raining... rainfall" but even...they care a lot. That was really interesting for me. And yeah, to hear that in my mind: 'wow you should care more about country actually.'" (Respondent A, personal communication, Jan 19, 2019)</p>

Table 5. Manager 3

Manager 3	Experience of diversity
<b>Definition</b>	The immersion in a multicultural environment and involvement in cross-cultural communication, which allows people to learn about different cultures under such circumstance.
<b>Indicator(s)</b>	community, different culture, food, sharing, family, different countries, interaction
<b>Example Quotes</b>	<p>“I actively participated in intercultural potluck last year, which I think is the best event...this is the one I really enjoy ...because I can share my food that is completely different from other countries here especially most of the people are from Asia” (Respondent C, personal communication, Jan 15, 2019)</p> <p>“I think because of the diversity that you just see in terms of you know it gives you that kind of exposure. It's a diversity in terms of the culture. I think it also educates you about the different issues that exist in the world. It makes me feel more entrenched towards my... towards my culture in such a way that I find my roots deeply grounded to who I am as Filipino” (Respondent V, personal communication, Jan 18, 2019)</p>

Table 6. Manager 4

Manager 4	Academic interests
<b>Definition</b>	Programs and events that offer resources as well as inspiration to facilitate personal research interests. People enhance their academic performance through the knowledge and experience.
<b>Indicator(s)</b>	research, interest, major, academic, seminar, social issues
<b>Example Quotes</b>	<p>Because you know you East-West Center is such a multi-sections...multi...professions organization therefore there are professional develop programs and leadership programs. It has research programs...Because again... because I am in the leadership program...so I engaged in a lot with a professional development program. Yeah. So I have engaged with like. APLP... Asia Pacific Leadership Programs...” (Respondent L, personal communication, Jan 19, 2019)</p> <p>“So I guess the IGSC is more for academic...it's more scholarly, it's more ...about showcasing...showcase of research like coming from different fields but it can also be promoting diversity in a way that it shows you areas of research not just in different fields but you know about different cultures or different countries. Right. So then what does the evening seminar ...is also academic like scholarly ...but it deals more about general issues like political cultural, social and it can have some you know like research or scholarly touch to it” (Respondent V, personal communication, Jan 18, 2019)</p>



Table 7. List of the themes

Theme	Sub-theme	Indication
Understanding to local culture	Preconceived understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The description of primitive impression of the local cultures in Hawai‘i.</li> <li>- Manager 1 and 3 show it.</li> </ul>
	Posterior understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The knowledge about the local culture in Hawai‘i they have learned through the EWC.</li> <li>- Manager 1 and 3 show it.</li> </ul>
Cultural diversity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The experiences in interaction with different cultures and the immersion in multicultural environment</li> <li>- Manager 1 and 3 show it.</li> </ul>
Awareness of home culture		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individuals’ demonstration of their own culture or their identities.</li> <li>- Manager 2 and 3 show it.</li> </ul>
Evaluation	Positive feedback/opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive evaluation of the activities and programs</li> <li>- Manager 2, 3 and 4 show it.</li> </ul>
	Non-positive feedback/opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non-positive evaluation of the activities and programs</li> <li>- Manager 4 shows it.</li> </ul>
	Academic/scholarly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The description of academic activities or programs</li> <li>- Manager 4 shows it.</li> </ul>
Community engagement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The experiences of the involvement in EWC and the EWC accommodation</li> <li>- Manager 1, 2, 3, 4 show it.</li> </ul>

Table 8. Labels and indicators of the themes

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Label(s)</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Differentiation</b>
<b>Theme 1a: The culture in Hawai‘i - Before coming to Hawai‘i</b>	Preliminary understanding, first impression or stereotype of Hawai‘i	tourism, surfing, hula, indigenous, diverse, relaxation, through flyers or TV, etc.	Manager 1 and 3 show it.
<b>Theme 1b: The culture in Hawai‘i - After arriving Hawai‘i</b>	Knowledge to Indigenous culture; Nature or environment; Social issues in Hawai‘i	Hawaiian history, indigenous culture, Micronesia, Pacific, East Asian culture (e.g. Japanese culture), Hawaiian vocabularies, etc.	Manager 1 and 3 show it.
<b>Theme 2- Cultural diversity</b>	Experiences, appreciation, connection within different cultures	Sentences and words such as ‘I learned Japanese culture’, ‘differences’, ‘food’, ‘sharing’, ‘friendship’, ‘intercultural potluck’, ‘East-West Fest’, ‘Concert on the Lawn’, etc.	Manager 1 and 3 show it.
<b>Theme 3- Home culture awareness</b>	Home culture/identity awareness	The respondents talked about the norms, values, foods, demographic, environment, history, traditions advantages, shortages of their own cultures/nations.	Manager 2 and 3 show it.
<b>Theme 4a: positive feedback/opinion</b>	Positive evaluation to the people and programs in the East-West Center.	Broadening horizon, learning different cultures, enhancing research interests, or building social networks	Manager 2, 3 and 4 show it.
<b>Theme 4b: non-positive feedback/opinions</b>	Non-positive evaluation to the people and programs in the East-West Center.	‘Not so related’, indirectly, ‘I don’t remember most of them...’, ‘not helping a lot’, ‘It will not give me much about local knowledge that I can use outside’, or ‘some of the lessons are good...’, ‘It has... its pros and cons’	Manager 4 shows it.

Table 8. (Continued)Labels and indicators of the themes

<b>Theme 4c: academic/scholarly</b>	<b>Events that are research-based or include academic contexts, discourse, issues.</b>	<b>Intellectual, formal, academic, scholarly, research interests, etc.</b>	<b>Manager 4 shows it.</b>
<b>Theme 5- Community engagement</b>	Engage in the East-West Center events/programs and build social connection.	Sense of belonging, family ('ohana), interpersonal relationship, group, friendship (May cover some elements of Theme 2, e.g., food sharing, living in a multicultural environment )	Manager 1, 2, 3, 4 show it.